

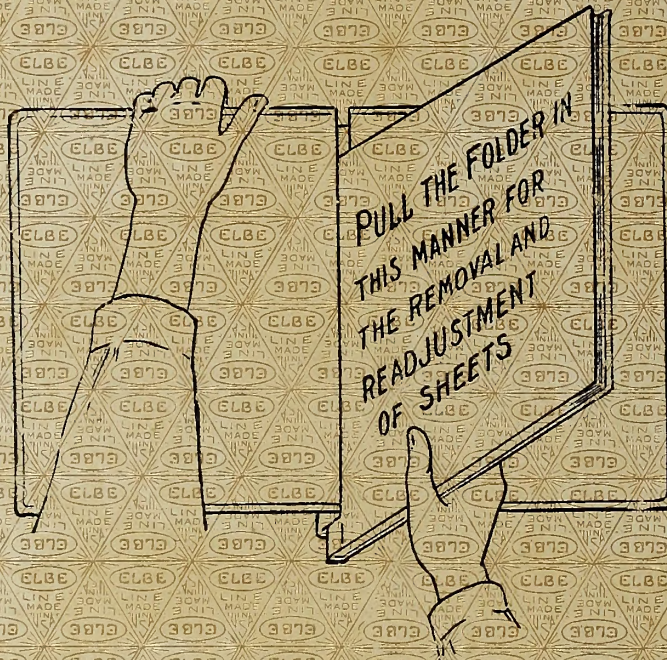


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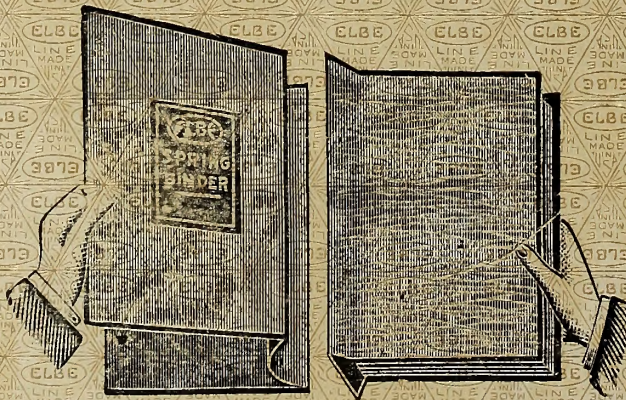


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PERSONALISTIC MONISM VERSUS PLURALISM

by

Borden Bowne Kessler

(A. B., Central Wesleyan College, 1900; S. T. B., Boston, 1904)

A Dissertation

submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy

GRADUATE SCHOOL  
BOSTON UNIVERSITY

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## V. DOES PLURALISM VACATE THE NOTION OF AN ABSOLUTE?

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52-55







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93-95

Here, as at other points, the pluralistic criticism gains all its force from the failure to distinguish between an Absolute as substance and an Absolute as cause. The statement that in monism "all phases of existence are alike characteristic of the all" (Schiller) ignores the possibility of an Absolute positing free beings within his system

95-96

Pluralism leads to no optimistic solution of the problem of evil. Pluralists magnify the moral appeal of a philosophy which assumes that even God may fail unless individuals do their utmost. But the highest type of devotion to the moral struggle is developed by the faith that in the plan of an infinite God evil is vanquished

96-97















## I N T R O D U C T I O N.

The purpose of this discussion is to weigh the relative merits of pluralistic and monistic metaphysics. The method to be followed will consist in an examination of the main problems of thought on which these opposing theories bear. The metaphysical difficulties of pluralism will be set forth, the arguments of modern pluralists examined, and an attempt made to establish the thesis that ultimate reality is one.

The world of experience is composed of a multitude of independent and interacting elements. At least, that is the common sense conclusion. More critically stated, change in one thing is followed by change in other things distinct from it, or the emergence of one state in the phenomenal order is the condition of the emergence of another state. Strictly speaking, of course, the connection (if there is any) between the two changes or states is not a matter of observation, but of inference. In fact, the problem becomes more mysterious the more we try to conceive how something which occurs in one being can be the source of change in another being. It is not hard to conceive of changes in different parts of one and the same being conditioning one another. The process is there all within a unity remaining identical with itself by making changes in one part to be followed by correspond-







ing changes in all its other parts. But how can the gulf between separate and not connected beings be bridged, making possible the action of one thing on another that forms no part of any fundamental unity or system with itself? This is a great mystery, which is not only overlooked by common sense, but made hopeless of solution by pluralism.

The problem of interaction here suggested may be postponed for a space. Let us first look into the problem of order and connection..







# I. PLURALISM AND THE PROBLEM OF ORDER OR SYSTEM.

Pluralism conceives of the world as composed of a multitude of independent units. These many units enter into the relation of interaction and so the world order, or the process of nature, emerges. The profound difficulty overlooked here is as to how the transition is made from a state of isolation to one of connection. The isolation is a fundamental postulate of pluralism. The connection is a fundamental condition of a world. Both are accepted by pluralism. With what consistency? How can things which have no essential dependence on each other or on some common ground arrive at a state where they mutually affect one another? Indeed, the problem would vanish if the many were looked upon simply as modes of the One. This, however, is precisely what pluralism denies. And so the problem of making the transition from independence to connection remains on its hands. Yet this fact of connection is constantly assumed. The pluralist is in sympathy with science. In the person of William James he is a distinguished scientist himself. Well, science proceeds on the assumption that events hang together according to a system of law. If uniformity of sequence exists among happenings, then the things among which they happen cannot exist in perfect independence. Some unitary bond must hold them together.

Can a world of independent Reals be an object of







science? Science presupposes that things can be compared and classified. What ground is there for supposing that the plural elements, whose being is ontologically independent of each other, will be thus commensurate? At best it is presuming on a lucky chance that they should do so. And yet, our modern pluralists are far from embracing a thoroughgoing atomism. Schiller speaks of a "guiding intelligence" ("Riddles of the Sphinx," 371). Again he says: "Pluralism, by uniting the Many in an eternal harmony, necessarily arrives...at a state in which the ever-present reality of perfection permits no question into what lies beyond and before that actual." (op.cit. 359, italics mine). Thus we see the ideas of unity and harmony surreptitiously introduced into a system that is based on their denial. Further, he states that the world-process displays "unity alike in its conception and in its execution." (op.cit. 373). From this he concludes that there can be no reason for polytheism. The point of interest is, not his denial of polytheism as against James' toleration of the idea, but the assertion of unity and order in the world-process. The same inconsistency with pluralism appears in his speaking of "the union of the individual spirits into some sort of whole." (op.cit. 435, italics mine).

Thus we see the pluralists constantly admitting a fundamental commensurability and unity of the world, in contradiction to their primary thesis. When James is conscious of making such concessions he hastens to assure







the reader that he is speaking simply as a pragmatist. Unity may, from pragmatist considerations, be postulated because it is convenient to do so. "But absolute unity, in spite of brilliant dashes in its direction, still remains undiscovered, still remains a Grenzbegriff." ("Will to Believe," p viii). He remarks that the unity we actually find seems to be that of a "collection." The universe is a "joint stock affair." Here he has in mind the plurality of the stock holders, not the unity of the corporation. To all this it may be replied, that a true monism would not claim that absolute unity was an empirically discovered fact. If it were, then the speculative arguments pro and con of monist and pluralist respectively would be altogether superfluous. But the very fact that the unity of the world is a Grenzbegriff augurs its truth. Scientific investigation expressly proceeds on the assumption of its truth. The advance in scientific knowledge consists just in pushing our knowledge of the uniformity of nature nearer the "limit", (Grenze). If things do not in the last analysis form a unitary system the investigator of nature would despair of adding to the sum of science. We may cheerfully admit that in the limited state of our knowledge the world presents much that is fragmentary. We may even go so far as to say that our experience is for the most part such as the pluralist insists on. But we refuse to acquiesce in this broken aspect of things as their final and true one. They do not simply happen to lie around and move around together, meeting in a multitude of opaque







attractions and repulsions; they belong together somehow, and as our knowledge grows our insight into their inner connection grows also. "Reason holds all things in solution," to borrow an expression by which James characterizes the fundamental postulate of the Hegelian philosophy.

The same fundamental monism appears in the system of the pluralist McTaggart. It is a monism that goes deeper than his abstract Absolute. For him this latter is but the sum of all being. Thoroughgoing idealist that he is, being is conceived only in the form of spirit. All that exists is the multitude of spirits and their experience. An absolute in the sense of a Supreme Spirit he denies. For him the Absolute is <sup>si</sup> simply the totality or "society" of finite spirits. This unity or society or Absolute, therefore, is something abstract and it would not be fair to accuse McTaggart of monism on account of this conception in his system. There is a much more concrete use of fundamental union in his system. He insists, for instance, that the Absolute is not simply composed of elements "mechanically" united. The world forms more of a system than that. Particularly in his doctrine of karma is a fundamental unity presupposed. Souls transmigrate in a line of destiny <sup>h</sup> which realizes moral law. Effect follows cause with perfect regularity. All soul life is bound together in a uniform moral order. More than that, the general trend of being is upward. He inclines to an optimistic position. In other words, the multiplicity of spirits which compose the universe are moving toward one







rational end. Now, can this "more than mechanical" system of things, this metempsychosis according to a moral order, this trend of evolution toward a rational and happy end-- can these things be held in a pluralistic system? Manifestly, they presuppose some center of Being which holds all that really exists in the unity of its embrace.

G. H. Howison is perhaps the most striking monist among modern pluralists. He calls his system "Harmonic Pluralism." The spirits which make up the units of his world constitute "with God and with each other an indivisibly harmonious whole." The sense consciousness of human spirits is declared to rise "toward complete harmony with the eternal ideal that is the changeless central essence of each mind, and whose proper and only real object is God." ("Limits of Evolution," 391). There is a "sociality of the primordial logic of self consciousness" which binds the monads into one. The unity which we scientifically observe in the world of nature is accounted for by the fact that nature is constituted by our minds. Before the minds of all of us there is the one Ideal, God, and in our spontaneous and free following of the singly Ideal our thinking is brought into system. Harmony is due, not to the constituting act of the one God, but to the fact that all minds tend and create after the one pattern, God. It is true, they are all free. They are not bound by any necessity or divine decree to give themselves with such "fealty" to the one Ideal. But they do this nevertheless. It is hard to see how an author could assert a fundamental







independence among his monads (souls) along with such beliefs as above outlined. What founds his "harmony?" Only the "free following of a single Ideal" by the separate units of the world. But if they are both free and ontologically separate, there is no ground for the assurance that they will all follow the same Ideal, and thus form a "harmonic" system. Howison here assumes a condition tenable only if the multiplicity of beings is conceived as grounded in a basal One. He finds insurmountable difficulty in the thought of free personalities being dependent for their being on a One; but the solution he offers is beset with still greater difficulties. It is harder to explain how metaphysically distinct and free personalities are certain to follow the one Ideal than how personalities can be free and yet at the same time owe the conditions and the essence of their being to one source. The very determinism which Howison has sought to avoid is re-introduced in aggravated form. He denies, indeed, that there is any necessity in all this. The action of minds, spirits, is all free. But he asserts at the same time that it all tends in the one direction, so as to make the world form a system. Contingency is not allowed. Necessity is verbally denied but actually introduced.

We conclude, then, that an orderly world becomes intelligible only as we conceive it to be metaphysically grounded in a One. This is explicitly taught by the monist, tacitly implied by the pluralist. The latter denies, it is true, that it is incumbent on us to give a metaphysical







account of the origin of the plural elements of being. They simply and eternally are. We must accept them. To ask any further questions as to their origin would be on a plane with the child's question, "Who made God?" It may be conceded to the pluralist that this is not formally an irrational contention. It is certain that something has to be accepted as a starting point in our speculations. If we try to explain absolutely everything by something else, we whirl away into the infinite regress. The question is, what will best satisfy the demands of thought. An initial One, or initial many? Naturally, the former is preferable. Cogent reasons must be adduced if we betake ourselves to the latter. Why the prodigality of ultimates? In adopting a short-cut to the solution of the problem of evil and of seeming disorder in the cosmos, pluralism creates more difficulties than it obviates. More than that, pluralism puts a strain on credulity when it asks us to believe that each monad is causa sui. If the Reals are able to cause themselves it is remarkable that they are so incompetent in the production of things of a much lesser order than themselves and bring forth a world full of error and evil. Further, the difficulty of an uncaused many remains unmountable. For it happens that the many form a marvellous system, a system so marvellous that it actually becomes possible to think and talk intelligibly about them. That they should have come together of their own absolute freedom to constitute such a system is more unthinkable than that modern civilized society should have been formed as a







result of perfectly independent human individuals deliberately entering into a social contract, as Rousseau thought. Order is secured in our world only on the condition of its having a unitary metaphysical Ground. Lacking that, the order and system which science presuppose must be viewed as the result of chance or necessity. This would be explaining light by darkness. If the universe were an aggregate of self-existent elements, the chance of their coming together and forming a system would be all but impossible. If, on the other hand, it roots in a unitary ground, order becomes conceivable. Hence we infer that the One only is basal, and that the many are dependent on it.







## II. PLURALISM AND THE PROBLEM OF INTERACTION.

Thus far we have been considering the problem of order or system. We have concluded that this problem remains insoluble on a pluralistic basis. It remains now for us to examine the fact that things affect one another, produce change, motion, and other results in one another. Can this phenomenon be accounted for in a pluralistic metaphysics?

Do things really interact? The very question is absurd from the standpoint of common sense. Of course, they do. We may reserve the right of giving an account of interaction different from that of common sense; but the surer we are of the fact of interaction, the surer we lock all beings into a unity of interdependence. None can act or be acted upon unless they subsist together in a unity of some kind. These strands of relation which bind things into an interacting system are as truly objective and real as the observed interaction itself. Wherein does the reality of these relating bonds consist? Pluralism has no answer. Monism, on the other hand, affirms that this fundamental relatedness on which interaction depends is an index of basal reality. This reality is not to be conceived of as abstract. It is the most concrete thing in existence. It is the very essence of things, coming to manifestation in experience through the phenomena of nature. These latter are made intelligible by this relating essence. It is this essence that is to be thought of as independent, not the







plurality of things whose interdependence and reciprocal affection can be understood only as grounded in such an essence. Things appear connected and interacting for the reason that they partake of the nature of this essence. They all spring from a common source; hence we can see how they can form a cosmos. They all express this one essence; hence when a change occurs at one point in the system of expression (the phenomenal order of things) changes must occur at other points also in order to maintain the self-equality of the essence. Thus the appearance of interaction arises; and only by some such conception can the appearance of interaction be made intelligible. All this, however, involves a denial of any fundamental independence of things, or pluralism.

Pluralism disproved by the very fact that things exist---In fact, it may be asked, Can things be at all except as they express a unitary underlying reality? The term "unitary" is advisedly employed, because of the necessity of recognizing a mutual activity of things on one another; and unless they are manifestations of the one ground they would necessarily be so independent of each other as to form parts of distinct worlds, and there would be no such thing as reciprocal affection. And without this mutual action on one another we should never become aware of their existence. In order to make this truth clear it will be well to define what can be meant by a thing. A thing is not a parcel of pure being to which sundry qualities are attached, or in which they inhere.







This notion is nowhere held among philosophers. There are too many difficulties with the notion of inherence, of subject existing in distinction from its attributes, to make any such theory tenable. Thinghood consists fundamentally in activity. Only that really exists which acts. A thing is accurately described only when we have discovered the formula of its activity. This formula or law alone tells what any particular thing is. The conception of activity cannot be abstracted from. With this idea firmly in mind pluralism becomes inconceivable. For if the nature of a thing consists in its activity, then it can exist only as it takes its place in a sphere of action. But action is not had in a vacuum. A thing to act must interact. But in order to interact it must stand in relation to other things. And to stand in relation to other things it must with them have its ground in a One which founds them all. Hence things cannot even be thought of as existing except for and through one another. As acting they imply one another. Their very being depends on their mutual relation in a connected world. If they were perfectly independent and incommensurable they could never get into a position of affecting one another. They could, therefore, never be found as acting. And unless they act they have no real existence. Common sense, indeed, assumes that things existing first as independent unities afterward enter into relations of action and reaction toward each other. But reflection shows the impossibility of construing the passage of things from an isolated state to one of ontological connection. How can independent beings become dependent to the extent of affecting each other? How does it happen,







if they are independent, that they conform themselves to one another? These questions are unanswerable. The independence superficially assumed by common sense and philosophically defended by pluralism, must be dropped as untenable. To the extent that they form an interacting system they are not independent. And only to the extent that they act on one another can they be said to exist. Their existence itself, criticism<sup>ci</sup> thus shows, compels us to look upon them as manifestations of a basal One. The effect of this conclusion on the ordinarily accepted notion of "interaction" may be reserved for subsequent consideration.

Impossibility of independence and interaction.--

Interaction between independent beings is unthinkable. A change produced by one upon another involves a change in each. To illustrate. The sun shines upon the earth and produces vegetation. The sun is the agent, the earth the patient. Entirely aside from the question how two supposedly independent entities could fall into a relation of acting and being acted upon, we see here that a fundamental union is involved. For, after all, the sun is not the sole agent in the case, nor the field on the earth the sole patient. The relation is in the reverse also. That is, a change in the earth is at the same time a change in the sun, and vice versa. The same sunshine through a different atmospheric medium produces different effects. The sum of cosmic energy remains constant. Its form changes in both factors, earth and sun. Therefore a change in one is a change in the other at the same time. This proves that sun and earth are not separate and independent beings. Of







course, it is not necessary to prove this. They form parts of the one solar system. This reference to sun and earth was only made to illustrate an underlying fact of interaction everywhere, namely, that things which affect one another reciprocally cannot be ontologically distinct. For in the final analysis the illustration does not go far enough. In an interacting system the bond between things must be, not merely a mechanical, but an organic or a living one.

The same result may be obtained in another way. If things are distinct and separate, how do they find it possible to interact? The answer is at first easy for common sense: they affect each other by impact. The bat strikes the ball and causes it to fly across the field. The heat touches the ice and causes it to melt. It is true, this explanation fails to satisfy even the uncritical mind when it is a case of action at a distance. For such cases the action is conceived in some round about way as taking place through a medium which acts on another in turn, all in spatial contact, until the eventual patient is reached. The only problem seems to be how to act across space. The real problem, however, is how to act across individuality. To explain this problem a variety of metaphorical explanations is proffered. It is said that "an influence" passes from one object to another. What does this mean? Is an influence a thing? Can it <sup>detach</sup> ~~detach~~ itself from one object to which it primarily belongs, hover in space for however short a time, and then attach itself to







another object, the object acted upon? If so, then the agent is not the original thing, but the "influence" itself; and the problem of interaction, which the "influence" was invoked to explain, would have arisen between the influence and the object acted upon. And so the process might be carried to infinity without bringing thought any nearer a solution than it was at the beginning. Equally unsatisfactory is the explanation that states or conditions pass between things. A hot iron heats a cold one and loses some of its heat in the process. As in the case of an influence passing from one thing to another, we have here metaphor passed off for metaphysics. For what is a state or condition apart from a thing? Can it, any better than an influence, make the leap across space or across independence from one thing to another? States, conditions, like qualities, are adjectives which have no existence apart from a noun. The problem is just how to pass from noun to noun, said nouns being ontologically independent. The real difficulty consists not in action across distance, but in bridging metaphysical distinctness.

To what conclusion are we led by these considerations? To the conclusion, amazing to unreflective common sense, that experience does not truly reveal the interaction of things at all, but only their concomitant variation. Hume, that genuine "radical empiricist," made this clear once for all. Critical rationalism agrees with him. There is a spontaneous concurrence of change. That is all we can say. Observation yields no more. All talk of







"forces" and "influences" and "states" passing from one thing to another is nothing but an unconsciously superadded mythology. We observe many cases of change occurring with uniform regularity; hence we speak of interaction. The uniform occurrence of change is, however, all that is given. To speak of interaction in the case is really to be guilty of hasty metaphysics. This truth becomes more obvious when the supposed interaction is psycho-physical. The sight of a basket of luscious fruit is followed by an increase in secretion of saliva. Colloquially we say the fruit caused the "mouth to water." Can anyone tell what this means? Surely no particle, power, pressure, or anything material or mechanical passed between the untouched fruit and the secreting glands. The physical result was the direct result of a mental condition aroused by sight of the fruit. But is there any possibility of definitely stating what is meant by a thought acting on the physical organism and producing a certain condition? Manifestly not. As a matter of fact, there is no absolute and universal necessity in the sequence. The sight of the same fruit might turn another man's stomach. How has the result arisen? If we confine ourselves to the supposedly interacting elements we are forced to remain without an answer. Some deeper principle will have to be invoked for explanation.

All things fundamentally one.-- The conclusions hitherto drawn in this discussion of interaction are negative. It has been shown that separate things cannot interact; that something, however, actually happens which gives rise to the appearance of interaction; that this appearance







is illusory because reciprocal action among beings ontologically disparate and independent is unthinkable; and that therefore the thought of interaction must be given up for the thought of spontaneous, though uniform, variation. These considerations, however, leave the problem unexplained. How shall we make intelligible to ourselves this uniformity, this action according to law, between the seemingly separate elements of the world? Only one course remains, namely, to conceive of being as fundamentally one. In this being all seemingly separate things share. Its nature they express. Their distinctness and independence exists in relation to one another (in the phenomenal sphere); their union and connection exists in relation to the founding One. That which appears as the interaction of the many is in reality the action of this One. Their existence must be conceived of as conditioned by this One. Of it they are organic members. This One is eternally perfect and complete. Therefore any change in one part of its being must be followed by changes in other parts, in order to maintain its self-equality. Hence what seems to be interaction is really the process of readjustment constantly taking place in the One. The dynamic proceeds from this One. The reason for the multitude of movements and changes in the world which we call interaction, lies in the perfection and power of this basal One, into whose unity all things enter. What looked like "powers," "forces," "states," "qualities," passing from one thing to another was in reality the immanent action of this ontological Ground of all being. The contradictions of action and reaction between independent







things vanishes, because there are no independent things. What seem to be such are simply diverse modes of the underlying one. In its unity they are all dynamically comprehended.

All this sounds far-fetched from the viewpoint of common observation. Things are manifestly independent and interacting. Some things appear to be related in the intimate connection of their reciprocal activity; but others are clearly independent and unconnected. To this natural objection two replies may be made. First, the fact that many things seem independent may be ascribed to a difference of function which the fundamental One confers on them. "The world is so full of a number of things," and among these in a universe of variety and change there are sure to be many diverse elements. Taken by themselves these elements may be as incommensurable as sound and color, or as poetic and commercial values. But this distinctness and independence which they exhibit as against one another does not hold as against the world Ground. Here, in this Ground, is the source of that unity which, with all their diversity, they yet possess, binding them together into a cosmos. The second reply is, that the unity thought discovers immanent in things can not be exhibited to the imagination. All attempts to do so are metaphorical and misleading. We cannot altogether escape employing such terms, but it is necessary to be on constant guard against misapprehension through space metaphor. "Parts," "modes," "emanations" of the "infinite substance,"--such are some of the designations that have been applied. Crude pantheisms as well as mysticisms are connoted by them. Such objectionable







meanings historically associated with these words do not compose the view here presented. One true meaning may be found to underlie them all: finite things are not ontologically independent; somehow they are bound together in a unity.

Things, rational spirits, and the Absolute.--

Modern "personalistic" pluralists are idealists. Things are the intelligently apprehended world ~~of world~~. The only ontological realities are spirits and their experience. With this view there need be no quarrel. The difficulty arises when the many metaphysical entities are viewed as uncaused and as not grounded in one fundamental essence. On the other hand, a pluralist like William James does not accept the idealism held by Howison, Schiller, and McTaggart. His metaphysics might be described as atomism. If, however, the postulate of pluralism be surrendered, it would be difficult to establish any function for separately existing things. That is, if our contention, that all things are grounded in a One, be accepted as proved, then separate things become superfluous to thought. Instead of separate things acting so as to produce the happenings of the world, the one Being acts through all. The phenomenal reality, or validity, of what are commonly viewed as things need not be called in question. Their metaphysical reality, that is, their independent, uncaused being, is all that would be denied. Final analysis would show that they all merely represent the activity of the one Being, the world ground. Because they all spring from the same source, provision would be made for their uniform action, for the possibility of







formulating their motion and progress according to what we call "natural law." In the non-personal world the many would all have to be conceived of as immanent in the One. When we reach the personal world, however, a seeming concession must be made to the pluralist. Here we recognize a relation besides immanence. The term "transcendence" with its spatial connotation is not satisfactory; but as the only available antithesis to the term "immanence," it will have to serve. Only, the concession to pluralism is not thoroughgoing. For an ultimate dependence, of persons on the One, as their creative ground, would have to be maintained. They possess a real distinctness, or otherness, however, in that they are conscious, distinguish between themselves and others, and in this conscious act of relation "detach" themselves from the One. But this "detachment," while of ontological significance as indicating centers of originaive power distinct from the One, is not absolute, because even such metaphysical realities as selves cannot be conceived as having their existence ultimately otherwise than through the founding activity of the one. In any other case their coordination into the world order would remain unintelligible.

At this point in the argument a further determination of the One may be made. That One hitherto insisted upon may with propriety be spoken of as the Absolute. The preceding paragraph has made clear that the term is not meant in a pantheistic sense nor in a sense sometimes associated with absolute idealism. Personality in the multitude of rational beings is provided for. Their







metaphysical reality, as against merely phenomenal things on the one hand and the ultimate Being on the other, has been emphasized. Nevertheless, the term "Absolute" justly applies to the world Ground in the system contemplated here, because all being, including that of ontologically real spirits, is conceived of as rooting causally in this one. The One, as causal Ground and everywhere immanent Agency, may thus be denominated the Absolute.

From the standpoint of the writer the metaphysical unity of things seems established by the considerations presented thus far. The impossibility of explaining causation between things compels us to think that they are not really independent. They must be looked upon as contained organically in a One, which by its immanent activity in the world produces what is ordinarily taken to be action between things. It is this One which is the substantial Ground of the many. But having staked so much on the argument from interaction it is in order to examine what is perhaps the chief criticism of this position. This is to be found in Schiller's discussion of Lotze's monism, ("Humanism," 62-84). Here Schiller denies that a unity of things must be provided to account for the fact that things act on one another. In fact<sup>c</sup>, Schiller denies that interaction presents a problem for explanation at all. It is an ultimate fact. We must accept interaction as a datum if we are to have any world at all. "We may therefore confidently affirm that without interaction there is no co-existence, and without coexistence there is no world. The existence of interaction is just as primary a fact as the







existence of the world itself, and the assertion that things act on one another is, in Kant's phrasing, an <sup>which</sup> 'analytical' proposition, ~~which~~ merely expands what was already asserted in saying 'there is a world.'" (Humanism, 65-66). "The problem of interaction, therefore, disappears. Or rather, it is merged in that of the existence of a world in general, of which it is a variant. And the existence of a world is not a problem for philosophy." (op.cit.66). All this begs the question. It is easy to dismiss the problem of interaction and call it a datum. Clearly, however, what is given is concomitant variation among things. This is all that sense reveals. To speak of interaction is to draw in the category of cause, and cause, as Hume has demonstrated, is not seen, but only inferred. Schiller, the pragmatist, disclaims being either an empiricist or a rationalist; but he must be empiricist pure and simple at this point.

Schiller's second objection to Lotze is that immanent action in the world Ground does not simplify the problem of interaction any more than simply to accept the datum of experience, namely, transitive action between things. ( 68-69). "We are accordingly told that the interactions of things become intelligible when regarded as the ways in which the Absolute changes its states. The question as to why it is intrinsically a more intelligible conception that a being should change its own states rather than those of another is not raised in this connection." (68).

Schiller argues that Lotze virtually admits that "the superior intelligibility of immanent as compared with transeu<sup>n</sup>t







action is not logical but merely psychological, and due to the familiarity with <sup>it</sup> which we seem to find in our own inner experience." (68). This cannot be maintained. For spontaneity is something we ourselves experience. We know that we act. Interaction, on the other hand, is not a matter of experience, but of inference; and if we can exhibit the interacting system (successfully) as really a case of spontaneous action, we have assimilated the fact to something of which we have immediate experience, direct knowledge. Schiller would rejoin, this is simply psychological familiarity, not logical ground. This cannot be admitted. To understand anything means to assimilate it to our personal experience. We are entitled to think of reality after the parallel of our own life. Has not Schiller elsewhere ("Riddles of the Sphinx," passim) declared that in a true sense our philosophy must be anthropomorphic? In thinking out the matter of interaction anthropomorphism helps us to a satisfying result. But Schiller seems entirely averse to apply the anthropomorphic principle at this point. He says that we cannot affirm the continuity of a (self-identical) Absolute through the multiplicity of its states. We do this in the case of our own selves, he adds, but that is because "we are conscious beings with a feeling of our identity." (69). But we cannot infer the continuity of the Absolute "like other people's on the analogy of our own." This is an arbitrary renunciation of the anthropomorphic principle which he has insisted upon.

Further, there are two other reasons why we are debarred, according to Schiller, from arguing that because







immanent change is intelligible in us, therefore it is intelligible in the Absolute. Change in us is due either, (1) to outside stimulus; or, (2) to a "psychological condition of disequilibrium," that is, a condition of unsatisfied desire. (69). Neither of these could be applied to the Absolute without absurdity. The Absolute cannot be affected from without, because there is nothing outside it. On the other hand, to ascribe change in the Absolute to the second reason would be in the nature of travesty. An Absolute with any want or unfulfilled desire in its nature would have no religious value. (cf. 69). The first point may be conceded, namely, there is nothing outside the Absolute. Change in it could not be ascribed to outer influence, and it is no part of our desire to maintain anything of the sort, indeed, rather, as against pluralism we would maintain the impossibility of just that. From the second point we dissent. A dissent might be based on precisely the consideration which Schiller urges in its favor, namely, the religious. There is nothing inherently objectionable to a God whose "psychic condition is disequibrated," to use the author's phrase, that is, to a God with unsatisfied desire. This is surely true from the standpoint of religion, whatever may be true from the standpoint of an abstract philosophic Absolute. The highest type of religion does not shrink from a God who suffers, loves, sorrows, yearns and therefore acts. Schiller's position is Spinoza's argument against teleology over again,-- a wrong, that is static, idea of divine perfection. And it is just the static conception of truth which Schiller the







pragmatist rejects.

While Schiller criticizes Lotze for concluding that there must be an underlying Unity (substance) to explain interaction, he agrees with Lotze's teaching that the "notion of a kernel of substance is a useless superstition." "Substance" here refers to the bearer of attributes or qualities of a thing in uncritical thought. Schiller argues, that, by the same logic as we reject an underlying core of being in individual things, we ought to reject the notion of a Single Substance underlying the phenomena of the world of change. As Lotze declares, "it is not in virtue of a substance contained in them that things are, they are when they are able to produce an appearance of there being a substance in them," so Schiller thinks he ought in consistency to go on and deny his basal monism by saying: 'it is not in virtue of a single substance underlying them that things are; they are when they are able to produce the appearance of there being such a substance.' Now, this discussion holds no brief for Lotze's philosophy, though acknowledging much indebtedness to his monistic teaching; Schiller's strictures may or may not be well founded in some respects; but his alternative is not necessary. <sup>When</sup> he argues from the above criticism that the same reasoning by which Lotze disproves a unity or core of being in things, a core to act as bearer of the attributes or qualities of things, forces us to discard the thought of a Unity of fundamental being to account for the diversity of phenomenal appearance, we are compelled to dissent. Such an argument might indeed be used to disprove a unity







of Substance in the universe. The unity for which we contend as against pluralism, however, is not one of substance, but one of cause. It is not to be thought that some uniform substance (whether matter or mind stuff) exists as a medium interpenetrating all other substances, like the ether; the term denotes a unitary Agent immanent in the whole system by its activity. Such a monism is not touched by the objections urged by Schiller in his essay. The One of our view, for which we contend over against a fundamental many of pluralism, is neither spatial nor material, but dynamic. It is a oneness of power and, we later hope to show, of thought. Its omnipresence is not to be thought of as substantial with any physical or quantitative connotation, but as an omnipresence of activity. Its unity consists in the unity of actively realized plan which runs through all the diversity of its manifestation. This diversity of manifestation, so apparent to sense, is not to be accepted as a final fact, but is to be viewed as a process in the realization of that unity of meaning on which alone we can conceive a world to be founded.

Schiller next criticizes Lotze's argument from commensurability, the argument, namely, that because things can be brought under a scientific system of classification and comparison, they must have a unitary Ground. This argument "lacks cogency," says Schiller, (70). His chief objection is this: "The supposed origin of a commensurable world out of an indefinite number of commensurable and incommensurable elements, is thinkable." (72). He hastens to







assure the reader of his personal opinion that it is not for that reason tenable. But the conceivability of such an outcome, he contends, vacates Lotze's conclusion to monism from commensurability. In another essay entitled "Darwinism and Design" in the same book Schiller contends against natural selection as sufficient to explain the world's adaptations. He there comes very near himself proving that the "origin of a commensurable world out of an indefinite number of commensurable and incommensurable elements" is not only untenable but unthinkable. At any rate, we are concerned with the actual world, not with any number of thinkable ones. The same arguments which, especially from the pragmatist Schiller's point of view, prove the untenability of a fortuitous origin of order and commensurability, prove its inconceivability for any purpose of establishing a practical conviction of truth.

Further, Schiller denies the metaphysical value of Lotze's Absolute. This Absolute remains self-identical. No rational case is made out for the existence of change. "Its sole aim, apparently, is to keep on affirming its own identity in an eternal tautology, and why it should pretend to change in doing this remains unintelligible." (73). The crux of the difficulty here is revealed in the term "eternal tautology." Change, indeed, is not provided for if this correctly describes the Absolute. But Lotze is no Eleatic. The very essence of his Absolute is activity. Its inner being is dynamic. Change, progress in the realm dependent on it, is therefore founded in the Absolute







itself. Certainly not in any change or progress of its own nature. That must be conceived as eternally perfect. If that provokes the epithet "eternal tautology," let it stand. A world ground itself in flux would be unstable as a source of being and progress. The Ground must be self-identical in its perfection. But just because it is perfect and may be conceived as desiring the perfection of its dependents (supposing, for the sake of argument, that it is self-conscious), it must found change and motion and guide, within limits perhaps, that process toward a goal which finally must be estimated in ethical terms. A changing world ground would be no world ground, but would itself stand in need of explanation. At the same time an Absolute which did not found change and progress would not be an Absolute. Later in this discussion the problem of change will be dealt with more fully. For the present enough has been said to show that Schiller's criticism forces on Lotze a static conception of the Absolute far from that philosopher's teaching.

It is to be concluded, therefore, that the supreme difficulty for pluralism presented by the phenomenon of interaction, has not been solved. It is no wonder that the pluralists seek to avoid and explain away the problem. Their efforts in this direction cannot be pronounced successful.







### III. PLURALISM AND THE PROBLEM OF KNOWLEDGE.

The metaphysical significance of commensurability has been considered at the beginning of our discussion. This fact has even stronger epistemological bearing on the theory of pluralism. Knowledge is the preception of things as standing in relations. This means that a known world cannot be a pluralistic one. It is true, there are many things in the world which we are not able to exhibit as elements in a coherent whole. The mind refuses, however, to take this as a final fact. Intelligible relations are assumed to exist, even where they are not seen. This is the assumption on which scientific investigation builds. If now these relations which bind the world into a unity are real, pluralism falls. If, on the other hand, they are not real, knowledge falls. There remains no further use to debate either the pluralistic or the monistic principle. The only realities remaining would be the flowing impressions; and about them nothing could be said, for as soon as we uttered a proposition we would be affirming relation, which, by hypothesis is null. To say A is B amounts to a denial of the disjunctness of two things which may have been appearing as disjunct in experience. Intelligible speech is in itself a denial of pluralism. It is only in the measure that things are viewed as commensurable that we can say anything about them. This commensurability, this standing in relation, is all that we contend for. From it follows the unity of the many in the One.

But, the pluralist rejoins, we are arguing from what is given in experience to what is merely implicit.







Hence we are building on the airy, abstaract foundation of the relatively unreal. For example, Schiller remarks:

"Similarly, the ultimate reason why we may not argue monistically from the actual plurality of things to the higher reality of an all-including world-ground is that the plurality is actual (ἐνέργεια), while the unity is only implicit (δυνάμις), and rests on our experience of the former. It is, therefore, of secondary reality and value." (Humanism," 225, note). What is "only implicit" is by this pluralist thinker regarded as of "secondary reality and value." The state of mind from which such a remark issues is hard to understand. "Only implicit!" When a mariner sees an iceberg he knows that a much larger mass of ice is submerged than appears above the surface of the water. He gives the berg due berth accordingly. And yet, the submerged portion is "only implicit" in the protruding portion, and "therefore of secondary reality and value." The apple implies the apple tree, the egg implies the hen. Surely we have perfectly unimpeachable ground for inferring the reality of the tree or the hen from their products. To ascribe to them merely "secondary reality" because they did not happen to be sensuously presented at the moment would be nonsense. The reality of the ground or cause of a thing is in no wise "secondary" to the thing itself. Hence when we speak of the logical implications of the experience of knowledge we are not dealing with vague conjectures of merely "secondary value." We are dealing with root realities. Now, coherence, commensurability, and unity are implications



Hence we are building on the six, apparent foundation of the relatively unreal. For example, Schiller remarks: "Ultimately, the ultimate reason why we may not argue monistically from the actual plurality of things to the higher reality of an all-including world-ground is that the plurality is actual (ἐνυφύστανον), while the unity is only implicit (ἐνυφύστανον), and rests on our experience of the former. It is, therefore, of secondary reality and value." (Humanism, "note"). That is "only implicit" is by this pluralist thinker regarded as of "secondary reality and value." The state of mind from which such a remark issues is hard to understand. "Only implicit!" When a person sees an iceberg he knows that a much larger mass of ice is submerged than appears above the surface of the water. He gives the bare one birth accordingly. And yet, the submerged portion is "only implicit" in the protruding portion, and "therefore of secondary reality and value." The apple implies the apple tree, the egg implies the hen. Surely we have perfectly unimpeachable ground for inferring the reality of the tree or the hen from their products. To ascribe to them merely "secondary reality" because they did not happen to be seasonally presented at the moment would be nonsense. The reality of the ground or cause of a thing is in no wise "secondary" to the thing itself. Hence when we speak of the logical implications of the experience of knowledge we are not dealing with vague conjectures of merely "secondary value." We are dealing with root realities. Now, coherence, consistency, and unity are implications



of cognition as a relational function. They are therefore primary, absolutely fundamental, not secondary, in their reality and value.

Knowing is grasping a portion of experience as a unity. As far as the world is known it is not fragmentary, but one. True, the world is not all known; but the goal as well as the presupposition of science is a knowable world and therefore a unitary one. The striving for knowledge presupposes a unity in the whole of being, though this may be grasped only in fragment. Some things affirmed by absolute idealists leave the impression that this unity is known. This properly provokes the pluralist dissent. Such a claim is absurd. The ideal, not the possession, of unity is the fact. What is here insisted upon is that knowledge is impossible except with this unity of things as a primary postulate on the one hand and as an ultimate ideal on the other.

Further, we are driven to the conclusion of the unity of reality, because we are compelled to interpret it in terms of our own selves. This is anthropomorphism, it is true, but inescapable. What is totally incommensurable with ourselves cannot become an object of knowledge. Now, since the days of Kant it has been accepted except by extreme empiristic actualists, that the self is to be conceived as a unity. Herein consists its essential nature. Without an abiding subject, knowing itself as identical through the time flow, the stream of consciousness could never rise to self-consciousness. The self as one must transcend the psychological processes of sensation and







knowledge. In the self life we have immediate experience of ontological reality. Some of our pluralists would affirm the same. Very well, then, reality as a whole must be interpreted in the same terms or remain forever inaccessible to us. From this point of view we are constrained to interpret the universe as an organic whole. We are not required to show how this can be. It is enough to point out that this unity is a necessary precondition of knowledge. It would be presumptuous to pretend to know how this unity consists in every part of the world. Experience no doubt shows breaks and discontinuities which we cannot cement over in our present limited state of understanding. But we labor on nevertheless, believing that the breaks have their connecting bonds, and that the fragments do ultimately constitute a whole. To this there is no alternative but the despair of skepticism. It may be said we are urging faith where knowledge is expected. The answer is, we satisfy ourselves with the implicates of knowledge where direct cognition is impossible. An intuition of monism must not be expected. It certainly is not claimed here. The alleged intuition of pluralism is equally denied. Our conclusion is simply that knowledge has meaning only when it is viewed as exhibiting unity. Only in the measure that things are brought under the category of unity are they known at all. Only as the world is ultimately one is it knowable. Our alternative is: monism or agnosticism.

Among pluralists Howison professes an idealistic rationalism. He argues ingeniously that the very basis of







pluralism is in the valid experience of apriori knowledge.

"The argument, in brief, is simply that of taking up the problem of reality and the source of knowledge, and in the face of supposed evolutionary explaining of all apriori knowledge away by the cumulative force of hereditary habit massed through ages, proving with exact care that every human mind, and therefore by analogy that every individual mind as such, does have and exercise this apriori knowledge...The unavoidable meaning of this <sup>fact</sup> ~~fact~~ is that every mind possesses a spontaneous objective cognition, and is therefore a case of what, quoting the ever memorable expression used by the writer of the Fourth Gospel, I have called the possession of 'life in itself.' This, I maintain, is the only intelligible meaning which anybody can attach to self-existence, independent being, and real freedom; as also it is the only intelligible meaning of knowing apriori." ("Limits of Evolution," 417). Thus it will be seen that Howison deems his system to stand or fall with apriori knowledge. For the validity of such knowledge he makes an extended argument, following Kant. He insists that his system "neither accepts sensation as an unfathomable datum merely, nor does it entertain the hypothesis that it is an effect produced in the mind by some foreign agent acting as an efficient cause." (p xxi).

The last clause of the quotation shows that he has followed Kant in his correction of Berkeley's epistemology. He is thoroughly Kantian in his theory of knowledge. He complains of the Oxford essayists ("Personal Idealism") for their







"empiristic epistemology," for their "organized new assault on apriori cognitions." This theory of knowledge of Howison is excellent. The question arises, does it harmonize with pluralism? In a world where the ontological components are independent it is strange to speak of apriori knowledge. This presupposes some uniform system of law applying throughout the realm of rationality, and requires for its explanation a single center of living for the knowable world. For the apriori knowledge contemplated by Howison is not something different for each mind. It is uniform throughout the entire world of rational spirits. He assumes, not only that "every mind possesses a spontaneous objective cognition," but that this cognition of "every mind" is of the same things and of the same kind in each. This would be a staggering coincidence in a pluralistic system. It could not be anything but a coincidence. The uniform body of knowledge springs up "spontaneously;" and yet, there is no single guiding principle back of or immanent in the plural minds to assure the commensurability or uniformity of the knowledge thus springing up in the ontologically distinct minds.

In James and Schiller we find ourselves face to face with a final irrationalism. Pluralism stands out in its true light. This appears most unequivocally in James. He is perfectly defiant and perfectly contented with his position of a universe that cannot be reduced to one system of rational consistency. That is seen in the remark about the absolute idealist "uproar about







chance." ("Will to Believe," p 178). The same position is to be seen in his statement that "There is no point of view absolutely public and universal." Howison contrasts his "conception of a pluralistic and libertarian rationalism," with "the irrational pluralism--confessed to repose at bottom on chance and unintelligibility--which is all that is attainable on the 'radical empiricism' of Prof. James and his associates." ("Limits of Evolution," pp xli-xlii).

This is not an untrue description of James' position by another pluralist. Schiller likewise is an arrationalist; but while James is driven to this stand by his empiricism, Schiller is led thereto by voluntarism. "The more sincerely and completely we recognize the presence of human activity in the construction of 'truth' and 'reality,' the more clearly is their contingency suggested, and the less plausible does it seem that all these apparently arbitrary procedures are foredoomed to issue in the unveiling of one single inevitable, and pre-existing 'system.'" ("Humanism," p 48). With the phrase "human activity in the construction of truth" Schiller means something else than the self-activity of the mind in knowledge in bringing apriori principles to bear on the raw materials of sense. He means something ultimately constitutive of truth. He means to teach that truth really has no existence or validity apart from some concrete range of human interest. This range of interest may change. Then truth would change also. There is no "one" system and no more, into which all truth must finally be







fitted." "It may well be that many alternative systems may be 'true,' and that 'reality' can be construed in various ways by our varying efforts." From this it would follow that there is no such thing as "eternal" truth. Mill would doubtless be accounted right in his remark that in another world than ours two times two might well equal five. "We cannot decide the measure of truth possessed by our actual bodies of knowledge by the mere test of systematic coherence." "Our logic as well as our metaphysic will have to concern itself more scrupulously and less perfunctorily with pluralistic possibilities." (See "Humanism," pp 48-9 for the above references). From the standpoint of Schiller's theory there is no room for the conviction that reason pervades the universe and that reason is one. Reason is reduced simply to an instrumental functioning of the mind. It may be one thing at one time and something else at another time. We are guilty of hypostasizing a merely regulative principle when we think of truth as eternal and unchanging. It is of a piece with the whole trend of absolute idealism, which constantly erects the abstractions of thought into necessities of being. We must accustom ourselves to another way of thinking. Intellectual construction, thought, truth must be no longer viewed as having any independent significance.. They are in no sense ends in themselves, but merely means to a more fundamental end which they subserve. And where are we to find this more real end? Answer, in the realm of will and feeling..







In all this we see that the epistemological weakness of pluralism lies in the fact that it accepts a fundamental irrationalism. This is not to be said of the intent of Howison. He labors hard to save reason in his world of disjunct elements. It cannot be said, however, that he succeeds. Even against McTaggart the Hegelian it is to be urged that he leaves the world unharmonized with reason. Whatever is, is ultimate with him, error and all. And yet, the pluralists do not make an utter surrender to irrationalism. Rather, they surrender part of the world to chaos in order to save a part of it for order and rationality. With James and Schiller, for instance, it is a question as between cutting up the world and so rescuing a portion of it from the wreck of unreason; or leaving it all together in one, and so keeping it all under the taint of error and evil. But this will not do. Simply because we may not be able to see the reason in things is not ground enough for asserting that somehow it is not there. This is not a <sup>plea</sup>~~plea~~ for blind faith. It is rather a plea for the possibility of the life of reason and science itself. All scientific progress rests on the assumption of a world which is orderly and which is one. There cannot be two or many bodies of truth or law. There must be but one, universally applicable, or thought collapses and science becomes futile. Now, the exhibition of this beautiful rationality of the all is far from attained. It is not an achievement, but an ideal of science and philosophy. To deny it because through the long labor of centuries the







human mind has not yet reached it, is simply to make thought impossible. The rationality of the world is the presupposition of all science. In this matter, instead of going off on the tangents of voluntarism or pragmatism or pluralism we must simply learn to labor and to wait.

The pluralistic-atheistic idealism of McTaggart likewise presents insuperable epistemological difficulties. He admits that the ordinary idealism, which makes the reality of things depend on their being known by some thinker, requires an omniscient God. To escape this result he propounds an idealism which teaches, not that nothing is real which is not known, but that nothing is real except the knowers. The maxim, "Esse est percipi," becomes with him, "Esse est percipere." To this it may be replied that such a procedure cuts the ground away from under any idealism. If idealism has any basis at all, it is in epistemology. Critical examination of knowledge may lead us to conclude that nothing can exist except as it is an object of thought. It does not satisfy the objection to say that only the subjects of thought are real. There is a certain genuine reality of phenomenal experience, which is object of these subjects, to be accounted for. This aspect of the problem is ignored in the idealism of "Esse est percipere." Moreover, with this multiplicity of individuals and plurality of world-content, the problem arises how the many subjects happen to be experiencing the same world. If the world is to be viewed as grounded in an ultimate One, the problem does not arise. But if the world is many, how







do we all happen to be experiencing the same one? Or, if we are not, how does the illusion arise that we are? This question about the common-to-all, which is the true principle constituting objectivity, remains opaque unless we view the world as, in the last analysis, the object of one Experient, such as McTaggart regards superfluous.

Pluralism and truth.--Professor James ("Will to Believe") accuses monism of reducing the world of ordinary experience to illusion. In the interest of rescuing truth for our knowing he embraces the pluralistic hypothesis. He would not even call it an hypothesis, but would say that he believes human faculties give us truth, and the truth they reveal (of the plurality of things) he accepts as final. This position sounds plausible to the uncritical, and in the interest of popularizing philosophy, which too much has remained in the closet, it seems promising. As a matter of fact, however, this position of James is the one which reduces the world to illusion and lands us in skepticism. It is not the position of the monist which leads to this result at all. It may be that some oriental pantheisms have been guilty of the thing James criticizes, but the difficulty is not inherent in monism and is not obviated by pluralism. It is not to be denied that the sense fact is pluralistic. Things as they lie around us and appear to sense perception are many. The question simply is, are we to stop with the data of a "radical empiricism?" Has cognition attained its goal? Have we really arrived at knowledge at all? Manifestly not. For why do we go beyond the simple sense fact to the formulations of science? In







the interest of knowledge and truth. The world of unconnected manyness is unintelligible. Thought passes from the rising and setting sun, given in sense, to the revolving earth, arrived at only through thought. This does not amount to a reduction of experience to illusion, however. It is illusion in the boor, perhaps. Br'er Jasper, who went up and down the country preaching that "de sun do move an' de earth do stan' still," was deluded. For him the sense world was in part illusion, because for him what was given in sense was final. The pluralist, however, would not contend for the dependability of experience in any such fashion as in the case of Br'er Jasper. Nevertheless, with precisely the same logic as the darky preacher, he would found a metaphysic on <sup>un-</sup>interpreted sense phenomena. Let it be emphasized, sense phenomena are not to be viewed as illusions, veiling an ever-eluding "thing-in-itself" behind them. Against such a theory the pluralist protest is right.

Neither are sense phenomena to be viewed as final fact. As to this the pluralist is wrong. These phenomena must be viewed in their connection. On no other basis can we arrive at truth. In other words, we must assume the world to be bound together in a unity of system such as is excluded in the pluralistic view. The sense fact is real, not only as a psychological event, but as a revelation of truth. But taken alone it may not enlighten us. We must compare it with other sense facts and correct our impressions by a repetition of impressions. If the phenomenon were pure illusion we never could arrive at truth. The radical empiricist is right in objecting to a







closet-spun system of reality; but the immediate datum of sense does not possess the same degree of reality as the systematized construction of the scientist. We are not walking in a world of dreams when we behold the heavens of moving stars and a stationary earth; but we have attained a higher degree of reality when we grasp the conception of the astronomical heavens.

To revert to the original thesis of the above paragraph: not the monist, but the pluralist reduces experience to illusion. Both are compelled to build on experience. But it is a fact frequently demonstrated in the life of all of us that we are misled by experience sometimes. When, then, are we to trust our experience? To this question the pluralist (of the radical empiricist kind) has no answer without shifting his base to some form of monism. The monist says, that experience is trustworthy when it is coherent. As a matter of fact, this is the criterion by which everyone, pluralist included, tests his experience. But this test involves a metaphysical position; and it is not that of the pluralist. The position involved is that of a coherent world, where all things are made for each other, and where their reality is recognized by the way their appearance fits in with all the rest. Now, such a world is knowable just in the measure that we are able to reduce it to a unity in our thought. Science is just this. It takes the mass of disconnected elements presented by sense experience and exhibits them as instances of an orderly and unitary system of law. Philosophy is







simply the attempt to continue the process which the special sciences have begun. Its method is in the last analysis the same. What the sciences do for single departments, philosophy seeks to do for the whole reach of human interest. The fact that the goal is not by any means fully attained, but remains an ideal rather than a possession, is nothing against the method. We have achieved human<sup>ly</sup> desirable and intellectually satisfying results as we have progressed from the observations of the boor to the formulations of the scientist; and likewise we have gone forward in our apprehension of truth as we have come to conceive of all the multiplicity of phenomena as expressions of the One. But in what estate is the pluralist? What assurance of truth has he? What warrant can he give for the satisfaction of the demands of cognition? Nothing further than bare impression, sense impression, in varying degrees of intensity, perhaps, but single and unconnected impression nevertheless. Since we know that impression alone often leads us astray, we are therefore forced to conclude that it is the pluralist who leaves us on the perilous brink of skepticism, not the monist.

To what conclusion, then, does this reasoning about the knowability of truth lead us? That everything and every event whatsoever exists in and for everything else. If it seems absurd to say that everything exists in everything else, we may state it in this way: everything forms part of a whole to which everything else is likewise related. In other words, the world in all its variety is but the







expression of a single Unity; the many all have their roots somehow in the One. To this result we <sup>come</sup> ~~one~~ for any knowable world. For knowability, as we have seen, depends on coherence. Coherence in a unity is just what pluralism denies. Hence we are compelled on epistemological grounds to reject pluralism. Universal interrelation is the necessary condition of a knowable world. On any other basis experience is chaos, is, indeed, not experience at all. A one-in-the-many is the precondition of science. Advance in science consists in the progressive exhibition of such unity. What applies to the special sciences in their particular realms applies to life and the world as a whole. About no other life and about no other world could we speak; none other could we make intelligible to one another. It must be emphasized also that this unity or coherence must be something more than a coexistence of unrelated elements in a single space or time. The unity must be an inner one, organic to the different elements themselves.







#### IV. DOES PLURALISM VACATE THE NOTION OF AN ABSOLUTE?

##### 1. The Absolute and a "Block Universe."

Certain historic associations of the term "Absolute" one could wish to avoid. The Absolute satirized by Hegel as the lion toward whose den all tracks pointed, but from which none led, is not of the sort here defended. Still, the term is retained, because the One is conceived as the ultimate reality on which all things depend and from, or rather, in which all individual things possess their reality.

Against this view of being it is urged that no progress or change is possible in it. Professor James calls it a "block universe." Schiller urges a similar criticism. This may be true of some monistic theories; but it is not necessary for monism to lead to such a result. The difficulty seems to be that the Absolute is conceived of as self-sufficient in abstraction from the many. This is not our conception. The One realizes its existence in and through positing the many. They are organic constituents of the One. The ontological significance of the many need not be denied in a monistic system. The thought to insist on is simply that the many have their constitutive ground in the One. This makes of the One an Absolute, it is true; but not an unrelated Absolute. It is merely verbal to define the Absolute as that which exists out of all relation. Our Absolute is conceived of as founding relations out of its own being, and at the same time realizing its own nature in that very act. The Absolute, if not wholly, at least







really in part, comes to itself in the plural products of its positing activity. Hence, to a certain class of the many a real ontologicality may be ascribed. At once some pluralist may hail this statement as a surrender of the monist case. No; true monism is retained in that the whole order of the many, even though it may possess a degree of metaphysical reality in some of its differentiated parts, depends for its existence and for its place in the scheme of reality, on the unitary Ground. This Ground is thus conceived, not as subsisting in a dreamy perfection indifferent and unrelated to the world of change and struggle. In all this movement the Absolute is immanent. Progress has its reality in relation with and by comparison with the perfect Absolute. It would be meaningless to speak of progress except from the standpoint of the abiding. The Absolute itself must be conceived of as changeless in its essence, but as itself founding change and realizing itself, its changeless self, in that process whose change and evolution it is the very eternal nature of the Absolute to produce. So the finite selves need not be conceived of as superfluous afterthoughts in a system where the One Absolute is all and in all. As posited by the One, products, as we shall argue later, of the self-limitation of the Absolute, they have their own limited, but real, power of origination, analogous to that of the Absolute itself, and by the use of this power their acts are vital parts in the world drama. Possibly some pluralist will retort at this point that this is all he has been contending for,--the genuine reality of Selves apart from the one world Ground. Indeed, just here







lies the possibility of clearing up the misunderstandings from which no doubt a large part of the polemic between monists and pluralists springs. In this essay the term "monism" and "Absolute" are clung to because of the desire to emphasize the metaphysical dependence of the many on the One, and because of the conviction that only on the primary supposition of such dependence can the world as a cosmos be made intelligible.

The pluralists, however, persist in asserting that to make the world dependent on such an originating One rules out change. The Absolute is by definition perfect. If so, all has been fixed from eternity. "Genuine novelties," "unmeditated beginnings," as James says, are excluded. "The whole feeling of reality, the whole sting and excitement of our voluntary life, depends on our sense that such things are really being decided from one moment to another, and that it is not the dull rattling off of a chain that was forged unnumerable ages ago." ("Principles of Psychology," Vol. I, 453). A misconception lurks here. It is that of conceiving of eternity (eternal time) under the form of a vast reach of space. This space all stands there complete at once. Time and eternity are ~~not~~ so. (No attempt is made here to distinguish between time and eternity. As far as we can talk about it at all, the latter must be thought of in terms of the former).

Space is static; time is a flow. If the many then depend on the positing act of the One, it does not follow that their destiny has been rubber-stamped in a book long ago. It







means that their destiny is being worked out now, in the course of time and change. The Absolute "worketh hitherto." The Absolute is not only in the past. Past, present, and future constitute one living whole through the activity of the One in them all. The Fountain of reality is not simply in the past, but in the continuous process which includes the ever-changing present.

Still, the pluralist persists in asking, does the Absolute change? If so, the designation "Absolute" does not apply; if not, we are left with a "block universe" after all. The answer must be, the Absolute does not change; its activity in time, however, changes and finds change in the world. "The "Finite God" of James is apparently included in the order of change. This, rightly, James distinguishes from the Absolute. For him, there is no all-embracing One. The Supreme Individual is himself one of the many, "one of the eaches," to use a term from "A Pluralistic Universe," (44). Such a God is insufficient for the explanation of change or anything else. If the absolutist fails to explain change because all is rigidly contained in the ancient Origin, the pluralist here fails to explain change because the highest principle or being invoked (a "Finite God") is insufficient as a causal ground for a cosmic fact. On the other hand, it may be contended by a critical monism that a living One, realizing its nature (or will) through a continuous time process, is a sufficient explanation of change, and does not involve a "block universe."



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## 2. The Absolute as Cause.

In discussing change above the attempt has been made to modify the term "Absolute" in such a way as to take account of the just criticisms of pluralism. It is not beyond hope to look for a future understanding between monists and pluralists on this point. At present, however, the pluralists declare against an "Absolute." McTaggart, it is true, uses the term, but denotes, not a basal Individual, but simply the system or "college" as he calls it, of all selves. This, of course, is a singular use of the term, and one which does not offend pluralists, nor give any satisfaction to monists. The word is generally avoided by pluralists because of its associations. In fact, modern pluralism is largely a psychological reaction against absolute idealism. Behind it lies a feeling of the importance of personal individuality. Howison dedicates his "Limits of Evolution" "to all who feel a deep concern for the dignity of the soul." This well indicates the animus of his philosophy. He confesses that, when his essays were first published in the journals, "monism of an Hegelian type played no small part, side by side with the strongest affirmations of personal reality and individual freedom...At the date of their first production I had not become aware of the hopeless contradiction between the two views." ("Limits of Evolution," p. xviii). This seems to be no less true of the atheist McTaggart. Howison frankly says that he abandons Hegelianism; but McTaggart, in an exhaustive study of Hegel attempts to show that Hegel is really not the monist he is usually taken to be at all, but







a pluralist. The success of his interpretation need not be estimated here. It is perfectly apparent where his interest lies. He has been trained in the Hegelian way of thinking. He is determined to remain a Hegelian, apparently; but selves exhaust the whole of being for his thought, individual selves. Hence it becomes necessary to show up his master in philosophy as holding the same position. He claims to have proved Hegel's Absolute to be, not a unitary being at all, but simply the sum of all the selves of the universe. The Absolute is not a self. In this he differs from the other pluralists who, while denying the absoluteness of God, still ascribe selfhood, generally an exalted selfhood, to him. In a similar way we see Schiller advocating pluralism as a way of escape from an absolutistic pantheism. "And so it (pluralism) will approve of that 'personal idealism' which strives to redeem the spiritual values an idealistic absolutism has so treacherously sold into the bondage of naturalism." ("Humanism," xxv). Again, "Monism has maintained a sort of preponderance, because it appeared simple and more satisfactory to the 'philosophic craving for unity.' On the other hand, it is incurably pantheistic, and disposed to dissolve away all the distinctions between things. ("Riddles of the Sphinx," 350). Personality is paramount. The merging of it in the Absolute is intolerable. This healthy self assertion on the part of the individual finds expression in the pluralistic attitude. William James evidences the same interest.







"The philosophy of the absolute agrees with the pluralistic philosophy which I am going to contrast with it in these lectures, in that both identify human substance with the divine substance. But whereas absolutism thinks that the said substance becomes fully divine only in the form of totality, and is not its real self in any form but the all-form, the pluralistic view which I prefer to adopt is willing to believe that there may ultimately never be an all-form at all, that the substance of reality may never get totally collected, that some of it may remain outside of the largest combination of it ever made, and that a distributive form of reality, the each-form, is logically as acceptable and empirically as probable as the all-form commonly acquiesced in as so obviously the self-evident thing." ("Pluralistic Universe," 34-35). It is to be noted that in every case the pluralism adopted is embraced as the only alternative deemed possible to a pantheistic monism. These extracts from the writings of modern pluralists indicate what feelings lie back of their theories. There is an ethical strain in their thinking. Pantheistic monism, with its blur of moral distinctions, appears to them intolerable. The only alternative which they recognize is pluralism. There is something paradoxical in the fact that some of them were trained in the school of Hegel. As just noted, McTäggart considers himself a good Hegelian still. Howison recognizes that he has made a break with his former view in becoming a pluralist. James and Schiller, on the other hand never had any sympathy with Hegelian metaphysics; but their anti-monism, like that of







the others mentioned, is due to a dissatisfaction with absolute idealism. The pantheistic merging of the individual in the whole, the loss of human personality in the all-inclusive being of God, is the stumbling block. James declares that the monism he criticizes is that of Hegel, the Cairds, Royce, T. H. Gree<sup>n</sup>, Nettleship, and their like. Their "absoluteness" (see his "Some Problems of Philosophy") errs at the following points: (1) It does not account for finite consciousness: If nothing exists except as God knows it, what are we to say about human ignorance? (2) It creates a problem of evil that admits of no solution without impugning the moral character of God. (3) It contradicts the character of reality as perceptually experienced. Change and multiplicity cannot arise in a fixed system of an absolute. (4) It is fatalistic. Similarly Schiller says: "Thus a personal and finite, but non-phenomenal, God is the only possible cause that can account for the existence and character of the world-process, and the belief in God's existence is intimately bound up with the belief in the reality of the world-process. Hence the method also of our proof of God's existence stands in sharpest contrast with that of Pantheism. It is not based on a supposed necessity of hypostasizing the abstract formula of a logical unity of the universe, a unity indifferent to every content and intrinsically empty." ("Riddles of the Sphinx," 372).

It is possible to sympathize with what has thus been outlined as the motive of pluralism without adopting its metaphysics. The merging of the One and the many in absolute idealism is untenable from epistemological as well







as ethical considerations. The problems of error on the one hand and of evil on the other remain unsolved in any such scheme. We are not necessarily driven to pluralism, however, to escape these difficulties. This would involve difficulties just as grave as those we sought to escape: There is a monism which differs at once from the monism of absolute idealism and from empiricist pluralism. Pluralists call themselves "personalists," "personal idealists." These terms have a good connotation. Is there no retaining them on the plane of an ultimate monism? This discussion defends the thesis that there is. The view may be stated in the form of two propositions: (1) The ultimate Being is one, and is the cause of all that exists. At once the pluralist will rejoin, that the ethical integrity of the One has been sacrificed, in view of the fact of evil. Hence he rejects the notion of divine omnipotence as incompatible with that of divine benevolence. (The adjective "divine" is used. For the One, or world Ground, or Absolute, thus far considered, may also be called "God." The causal relation between the One and the many has appeared. Hence there is no impropriety in the use of the word for Deity to denote the One, with its theistic-religious associations). The fact of evil, however, leads the pluralist to conclude with a "Finite God." To this objection we answer with a second proposition: (2) The Causal One posits free beings. These are able to use their freedom in a way that harmonizes with the purposes of their Cause; or they may use it in defiance of that Cause.







This second proposition will be claimed as a concession to the pluralist position. As against pure absolutism it may be so considered; but it certainly is just as much a denial of pantheistic absolutism as it is of pure pluralism. If anyone wished to call the view summarized in the two propositions "critical pluralism," there need be no objection so long as the thing is understood. To the writer the term "pluralism" does not accurately describe the theory. It is monism, because all depends ultimately on the One. It is anti-pluralism in the conception that the One could posit free beings, which, while dependent on itself, still could defy it. Such a conception, sometimes flaunted as unthinkable from the standpoint of logic, is not without analogy in experience, for example, the dependence of a son on his father. The latter is not to be held responsible for the whole conduct of his son simply because the relation of dependence is undeniable. It may be admitted that the name "pluralism" could describe the universe after the emergence of free spirits. There is no need of insisting on terms. The objection to the use of the term lies in the fact that it is associated with the theory of an ultimate and eternal many. There is nothing inherently inconceivable in the notion of free spirits ultimately depending on a One. If we have such a system of free spirits, then from the point of their beginning to exist the universe would be pluralistic, that is, metaphysical reality and power of origination would inhere, in some measure, in the many as well as in the One. But the diffi-







culties of an unoriginated many, a many joined to no common source and yet somehow forming an intelligible system, a cosmos, are avoided, because the subsequent pluralism, (so-called) is seen to be ultimately dependent on the eternal One.

Another illustration of the pluralistic way of seeing only two extreme alternatives in the matter of an Absolute is seen in Schiller's statement ("Humanism," 81); that in a monistic system "all the phases of existence are alike characteristic of the All." In other words: we must be pluralists or pantheists. Between these two extremes, however, there lies a middle ground. It is true, certainly, pantheism links God up with evil in an intolerable fashion. Pluralism pretends to solve the problem by cutting the causal connection between God and the world altogether. This is no solution. In the context of the above quotation Schiller uses the expression: "once equate God with the totality of existence, and no one can understand how there can be in the All an element which is alien to the All." (81). That is pantheism, certainly. But it is not necessary to "equate God with the totality of existence in order to remain monist. It is not a question of "equating," but of causality. An ultimate monism may be held on the theory that the one and only Ground has freely chosen to create separate things. Further than that, it is perfectly intelligible to conceive of this creative Ground positing beings, many beings, which like itself are free. In that case we have room for all those happenings in the world which we would be loth to refer to a good Deity. They may







be products of these lesser spirits, all ultimately owing their being to the One, indeed, but because raised to the dignity of sharing the Creator's nature, having the power of using a noble endowment in ignoble fashion. A more detailed discussion of the problem of evil is reserved for a later section.

Underlying the criticism of monism as implicating God with evil is the conception of the relation between God and the world in terms of substance, as seen in the above quotation from Schiller. This is erroneous. The world is not part of God; it is product of his activity. He does not impart of himself as substance to his creatures; he imparts himself in the sense of realizing his purposes through them. God, the One Ultimate, must not be thought of as the all-substance, but simply as the ultimate cause of all. The essence of his being is causal intelligence. As such he posits the products of his purpose as we do our thoughts. Among such products it is conceivable there may be free spirits. Once having posited them there would be a contingent pluralism--by extension of the term; but a proper pluralism it would not be, for the whole would originally be dependent on the One. Nor is there a contradiction in the statement that the relation between God and the world must not be thought of under the form of substance, and the other statement that rational spirits share in the very nature of God. What is meant is, that these spirits are not quantitative portions of God's being, but dynamic products of his creative activity.

The monism here contended for does not conceive of the One as the aggregate of all being. It is only







against such a conception that the criticisms of pluralism hold. If the many are merely parts of the One, no real independence could be asserted of them; neither could any individuality be asserted of the One. For the Absolute would be consumed in its modes or manifestations. When, however, the relation between the two is thought of under the form of causality, the difficulty vanishes. In this conception of the unity of all things through a common causal ground the difficulties raised by pluralism are solved. The many are one, not as being parts of the same substance, but as being products of the same creative power.

The notion of creation demands further specification. This notion is a stone of stumbling for the pluralist. The very mark of ontological reality in anything for him is the fact of its not being originated. A world of created beings means in his thinking a world of unreal beings. The selves, if created, are but part of the illusory order of unreality. Our reply is, that a world of plurality and change is but a groundless flux or phantasm unless it is conceived as taking its point of departure from some creative ground. The whole hangs on nothing. Movement, change, lacking a unitary and purposive direction, is either chaotic, or else its orderly process remains an opaque mystery. The question is only, which is the greater mystery, the affirmation of causal Intelligence, or the denial of such causality? Manifestly the strain on faith is less in the affirmation. In order to meet the pluralist







difficulty regarding causation and creation it will be well to examine the statements of some of its exponents on the subject.

For McTaggart creation and causation in the metaphysical sense are superfluous. Things are not created; they simply are. Existence is for him scarcely an evolution; it is simply a revolution world without end of eternally given elements of being. (See "Some Dogmas of Religion," chapter on "A Non-Omnipotent God," Sec. A.). The very idea of creation is a mass of contradictions. His fundamental view is that "All existent reality is eternal and ultimate... There can not be a creative God, or a creator of any sort because there is nothing for him to create." The universe is not a creation, but a summation. Howison agrees with McTaggart in denying that God created the world; but he says that man created it. It is a mistake to think that man is an outcome of the evolutionary movement in nature. Man is prior to it. It depends on him and his thinking, not he on it. The Prime Mover is not God, but the entire world of spirits. ~~Man has determined the order of nature, not vice versa.~~ "Not only God, but also the entire world of free minds other than God, must condition Nature; and, as we shall learn later in our inquiry, they must condition it in a sense that God does not. They, we shall find, must be directly and productively causal of it, while God's conditioning of it can be only indirect and remote; namely, as we shall see, by the constant reference to him, as their ruling Ideal, which their nature-begetting minds spontaneously have." ("Limits of Evolution," 325-326). /The universe







exists "in and through our knowing it." Cognition is considered by him to be the indispensable condition of the existence of reality. The world is a "consensus." His system attempts to explain nature "wholly from the resources of the individual mind." In the full sense, the whole circle of minds, he says, must be added to the explanation, that is, the whole orb of minds, all spirits, including God. But when we have reached this stage, we are no longer, he says, in the region of efficient causation, but in that of final causation. This touches the next point in his view of cause. That an underlying divine causality is bringing the world to its consummation of perfection he would not deny; but this guiding work of God is accomplished, not as is usually supposed, by efficient causation, but by final causation. It is not the power of force, but the power of persuading rational beings. Howison declares that the key to his whole view is "found in its doctrine concerning the system of causation." Final cause instead of efficient cause holds the organizing place. He goes so far as to speak of this as "the grounding and constitutive principle of real existence." (op.cit. pp xvii-xviii). The control exercised is that of an Ideal, held before the minds of eternal spirits, who are on their part supposed to follow in spontaneous freedom. But they follow, they are not forced. God is the "Ideal Goal toward which each consciousness in its eternal freedom moves its merely natural and shifting being, in its effort after complete accord between the two phases of its nature, the eternal and the temporal,







the rational and the sensuous." (op.cit. 391-392). God's efficient action on the phenomenal order, that is, on that part of the world not composed of spirits, is not deemed necessary. In fact, it is denied. God rules us by holding the Ideal of Perfection, that is, himself, before us. We spontaneously follow, though free, and then the world of phenomena, which depends entirely on our thinking, or the thinking of other spirits less than God, is fashioned gradually after the pattern which God has inspired in us.

Schiller allows to God more efficient action. He conceives of him as the creator of the phenomenal world. ("Riddles of the Sphinx," chapter on "Man and God."). Of man he says God is "cause," but he does not speak of him as "creator." This would not comport with his pluralism. When he thus speaks of man as caused by God, he does not mean his transcendental ego, which is the eternal part of him; rather, he means only man's phenomenal self. While with Howison the world process is simply the product of the thought of individual spirits other than God, with Schiller it is the product of an interaction between transcendental egos and God. The material evolution is the product of a partnership action between the divine and lesser spirits. The contrast between Schiller and Howison on this point is seen in the following: "We have, therefore, in the world process the working of an intelligence which not only guides the actions of the unconscious material existences, but overrules those of the conscious intelligences." (op/cit. 371, italics mine). An "overruling" of free beings Howison could not tolerate in his system. Schiller, himself,







would not claim that this overruling is that of omnipotence; but yet that of a power greater than possessed by human selves. In this overruling power he sees the warrant of a final "kingdom of heaven." The marks of this overruling Intelligence he recognizes in the purposeful adaptations in nature. His approval of the teleological argument is complete.

As against these theories monism affirms a God who creates the world. This is meant to apply to the real world, not to the phenomenal order only, as in the case of Schiller. The pluralists hold the real world to be one of spirits. These together with God create the phenomenal world. This idealistic view of "creation," (if we desire to use that term) is satisfactory; but it does not go far enough. The ultimate elements of being, spirits themselves, must be viewed as owing their origin to the Absolute. The motive in denying this on the part of pluralists is good enough. Individuality and freedom are to be conserved for man. These need not be considered as sacrificed, however, if he is looked upon, in his inner nature, as coming from God. For the Creator may will to grant him just that coveted independence. The determinist and the thorough-going pantheist cannot see this,, of course. With this feeling it is easy to have profound sympathy. In fact, some sort of pluralism must be maintained in the interest of moral responsibility. But it need not be an ultimate pluralism. Let it be one from the point of creation on. Let it be dependent on the positing will of the world Ground; and let its continuance be conditioned on the purpose of God. In







the space between, a large measure of pluralism may safely be affirmed.

The notion of creation is necessary to secure order in the world. Unless it be the work of an intelligent world Ground, there is nothing left to give us a cosmos but chance or necessity. This would be expecting light from darkness. If the universe were an aggregate of self-existent elements, the chance of their coming together and forming a system would be all but impossible. If, on the other hand, it roots in a unitary ground, and that an intelligent one, order is provided for. The individuality required for ethics and religion is secured by viewing it as founded in the creative will of the Absolute. On the other hand, if we deny creation, and assert the independent existence of monads or souls, we have the problem of pre-existence on our hands. This confronts us with the fact of heredity, not yet cleared up on the basis of pre-existence; and with the difficulty of accounting for the very existence of the many monads of spirits. The mind recoils from beginning with more originals or ultimates than necessary. If logic and the facts demand many originals, we would accept them. It is certain that we must begin with something unexplained. The one Intelligence with which we start on a monistic basis is simply accepted, not accounted for. But to set out with a plurality of ultimates is unnecessarily heaping up troubles for ourselves. Hence we assume that the One only is basal, and that the many are dependent on it. This fact of dependence we express in the idea of creation.







McTaggart, who views "all existent reality as eternal and ultimate," frankly accepts the idea of many originals. It would be hard to argue with this state of mind. It is scarcely to be supposed that this is his deliberate meaning. More likely it is just this difficulty that pluralists have not generally faced. Surely the mind finds it easier to accept one mystery than many. If through such an acceptance many problems are clarified, pragmatic if not logical considerations justify the one assumption. It is not to be claimed that we understand creation. It is claimed, however, that to conceive of an uncreated One as being the Ground of the many is easier and more reasonable than to conceive of the uncreated many as being their own ground, or as groundless.

When we come to Howison and Schiller we really have a surreptitious use of the notion of a unitary creative Ground, a notion, of course, which is explicitly denied by them. Howison speaks of a "system of causation," a "grounding and constitutive principle of real existence." (op.cit. pp xvii-xviii). This he defines as an "Ideal" whose effective operation is "a fronte" instead of "a tergo." He substitutes final for efficient causation altogether; and this final cause is "grounding and constitutive." He is quite explicit and insistent on this point. James Ward ("Realm of Ends," 459) well declares that to speak of final cause as "constitutive" is "philosophical barbarism." In fact, while denying creation explicitly, Howison really affirms it. For example: "Real creation means such an







eternal dependence of other souls upon God that the non-existence of God would involve the non-existence of all souls, while his existence is the essential supplementing Reality that raises them to reality; without him they would be but void names and bare possibilities." (op.cit. p xvii). Here God is affirmed to be the ground of the existence of the many souls. Again, he says: "The self-existent perfection of deity itself freely demands for its fulfilment the possession of a world that is in God's own image, and such a control of it as is alone consistent with its being so." (op.cit. 75). Here the "constitutive" power of God is something more than "vis a fronte." The very causal dependence that Howison denies in the interest of his pluralism he is thus continually led to affirm in the interest of system. Schiller denies creation, but accepts teleology. It might be consistent to believe in purpose and polytheism at the same time; but causality could not be denied. In a polytheistic scheme the teleology could be held only because the gods were conceived as producing the designed system. This productive or creative relation, however, Schiller denies. How, then, can he properly speak of teleology? A purpose must be the purpose of some one who is achieving it. This dynamic relation is pluralistically denied. Further, he is no more consistent than Howison in holding to a denial of creation. He uses such terms as "guiding" and "overruling"<sup>to</sup> describe the action of his God. This "overruling", he would hasten to add, was exercised by God over beings which he did not originally create.







Very well; but a causal relation is implied in his statements. Once admit such a causal (efficient) relation and the possibility of creation is established.

### 3. The Absolute as Intelligence.

Our conclusion thus far is that there can be only one fundamental existence, and that this existence must be thought of as Cause or creative Ground. The difficulties of such a view from the standpoint of the diversities of being remain unsolved, however, until we advance one step further and think of this One under the form of intelligence. The fundamental existence must be conceived of as a thinking existence. Its unity and its causality are mere abstractions unless they are conceived in the form of intelligence. In man's life of self-directive intelligence alone does he find the type of causality. Here, too, is the only type of real unity in experience. The psychological process of thought is manifold, and mental impressions are many. Through all this manifold, however, the thinking subject maintains its unity. Such unity as the thought process has it receives through the meaning with which it is informed by intelligence, the thinking subject. This subject posits ideas, not as bare logical concepts, but as purposed plans. In the constitutive act of thinking--the act which raises psychological event into the realm of meaning, or real thought--man has direct experience of what is meant by creation or causation. Just as the whole life of intellect depends on this fundamental constitutive act of the thinking subject,







so the whole order of cosmic being depends on the central creative Intelligence, of which it is the expression. Further, just as the diversity of sensation and thought flow are bound together into a rational unity by the constitutive activity of the mental subject, so the pluralism of the world issues in a metaphysical monism through its creative relation to the fundamental, grounding Intelligence. The unity for which a true monism contends is not the formal unity of classification, nor the abstract unity of a fused aggregate; it is of the only sort of unity in diversity that we actually experience in life, namely, the unity of intelligent meaning amid the diversity of the stream of consciousness. This view saves us from Eleatic rigidity, or a "block universe." On any other basis than that of intelligence our unity is abstract, not really exhibited in life. Much monism has been of this abstract sort, and pluralism is to be viewed as a reaction therefrom. The reaction toward pluralism is psychologically intelligible. The contention here sustained is simply that the reaction to ultimate pluralism is after all not logically justified. An abstract, absolute idealism is to be abandoned in favor of a critical personalistic idealism. Personal intelligence is many without ceasing to be one. It produces plurality, posits change, but itself transcends the flow, and in so doing informs the chaotic and changing with the unity of order and abiding meaning.

Such a causal Intelligence is rightly called infinite and absolute. It is absolute in that it exists for







itself in wholeness or independent completeness. All depends for its existence on it; but it depends on nothing outside itself. It is infinite in that there are no limits in the realm of actual existence to its activity as world Ground. By the two terms "absolute" and "infinite" we simply mean that the whole finite order is dependent on the One. The fundamental category under which the Infinite and Absolute is to be thought is personal intelligence. With this in mind the confusions are avoided which arise when the Infinite and Absolute are conceived spatially, mechanically, or in any impersonal, abstract fashion.

#### 4. The Absolute and Individuality.

From the pluralist quarter come three classes of objections to the idea of an absolute and infinite god. First, it is claimed that the very idea of personal intelligence excludes absoluteness; second, it is declared that if there were a creative Absolute, human individuality and freedom would be swallowed up; third, it is insisted that the fact of evil hopelessly involves an infinite God. Howison believes in a personal God and calls him infinite; but he calls all the multitude of rational beings infinite also, and denies that God is creator. This is a curious use of the term "infinite." In reviewing the first edition of "Limits of Evolution" McTaggart assumed because Howison held both pluralism and theism, that his theory was one of a finite God. In the second edition Howison vigorously protests against the term "finite." For his thinking divine







infinity is not incompatible with a fundamental pluralism.

"Eternity, self-existence, self-activity, freedom and infinity are to me all interchangeable terms." (op.cit. 422).

Every spirit, therefore, not God only, is so designated.

Thus we see that Howison, while using the term, does not mean with it the ultimate dependence of all beings on God.

He is interested in denying this dependence on account of freedom in the human individual. Either the dependence or the freedom must go, he thinks. And yet, men stand in a very real relation to God, according to him. Not being their efficient cause, he is their Final Cause, that is, the Ideal Type toward which they are continually approximating, and to which they shall finally attain in the perfected divine-human society of the Kingdom of Heaven. McTaggart objects to calling an "Ideal Type," this "sole mind possessing absolute and eternal perfection," God. He insists that we have no right to call a being by that name if we do not understand by him the Creator so designated by traditional usage. To this Howison rejoins that "this solitude of self-existence, conjoined with this universal efficient causality" is not the central and essential thing in the traditional religious thought of Christendom. Creation may be eliminated from our thought of the Deity. There still remain holiness, justice, love. "To remove the name of God from the clarified and purified conception of the eternal Ideal Type would be to do violence, inexcusable affront, to the deepest and truest element in the historical religious consciousness...What offends us in the Spinozistic or other monistic appropriations of the name 'God' is the







evident absence from their Absolute of all the essential moral qualities. In these it is that true Deity lies, and all God's metaphysical attributes must be keyed up to them; not one of these 'natural' attributes dare be construed in any way that conflicts with the eternal moral essence."

(op.cit. 429-430). Howison thinks of the power of God as solely the power of love. It is a vis a fronte, not a vis a tergo. Of anything like coercion, the violation of individuality in lesser spirits, he will not think. Hence final cause only, never efficient cause, is to be ascribed to God. Thus we see that a God as restricted as is Howison's may, with McTaggart, be referred to as "finite," in spite of his protest against the term.

When we come to James and Schiller we find frank use of the term "Finite God." In fact, James will not dogmatize about the possibility or impossibility of there being more than one being who ought to be called God. "The outlines of the superhuman consciousness thus made probable must remain, however, very vague, and the number of functionally distinct 'selves' it comports and carries has to be left entirely problematic. It may be polytheistically or it may be monotheistically conceived of." ("Pluralistic Universe," 310). God is one of us. He is no doubt the greatest of us all, but to speak of him as in any sense all-inclusive is nonsense. Such a god would be a strange god. In fact, he is only an abstraction. We cannot believe in him without denying that manifest world of many and often disconnected things which a radical empiricism reveals. The







world

is too full of contradictions to be made all dependent on one infinite God. Further, with such a God all would be fixed in a changeless order of predestination, and progress and the zest of struggle and achievement would be ruled out. "Only one thing is certain, and that is the result of our criticism of the Absolute: the only way to escape from the paradoxes and perplexities that a consistently thought-out monistic universe suffers from as from a species of auto-intoxication--the mystery of the 'fall' namely, of reality lapsing into appearance, truth into error, perfection into imperfection; of evil, in short, the mystery of universal determinism, of the block-universe eternal without a history, etc.;--the only way of escape, I say, from all this is to be frankly pluralistic and assume that the superhuman consciousness, however vast it may be, has itself an external environment, and consequently is finite." (op.cit. 310). Such a "Finite God" would not leave us with the problem of having to explain evil, because, not being omnipotent, he could not be assumed to be able to prevent it. Further, except on the foundation of an Absolute we are not troubled with the idealistic pest of an antithesis between appearance and reality. Moreover, such a "Finite God" has decided religious superiority over his "rival" and "enemy," the Absolute. For the Absolute is timeless. Of what comfort can such a God be to us in our struggles? For our human experiences, those things which drive men naturally to pray, are all lived in time. There can be no feeling at home with a God who has no history. "The world that each of







us feels most intimately at home with is that of beings with histories that play into our history, whom we can help in their vicissitudes even as they help us in ours. This satisfaction the Absolute denies us; we can neither help nor hinder it, for it stands outside of history."

(op.cit. 49). Only a God who lives in time can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities.

The view of Schiller is substantially the same as that of James. "The accumulation of the data enabling us to estimate the drift of the world-process enables us also for the first time to develop consistently the finite and personal elements in Theism; and following out this train of thought we shall come to realize that religion, philosophy and science alike demand a belief in a personal and limited God." ( "Riddles of the Sphinx," 324). Again: "Thus an infinite God can have neither personality nor consciousness, for they both depend on limitation. Personality rests on the distinction of one person from another, consciousness on the distinction of Self and Not-Self." (op.cit. 313-314). Such a God has religious value. The Absolute of philosophy has not. As expressed in the above quotation, the only God who could be conscious or personal must be finite. Furthermore, assertion of a "Finite God" is the only way to escape from the maya philosophy. If the Deity is infinite, the world as we experience it is simply illusion. "The assertion, therefore, of the finiteness of God is primarily the assertion of the knowableness of the world, of the commensurateness of the deity with our intelligence." (op. cit. 360). And again, if God is infinite, then, as the agnostics teach, he is unknowable. For we cannot grasp the Infinite







within the compass of our finite minds. An Unknowable, it is urged, may stir in us feelings of awe and reverence; but such a being is not satisfying to our religious needs. From this lack a "Finite God" does not suffer. (cf. op.cit. 360sq).

Our objection to this pluralistic notion of a "Finite God" is based on metaphysical and ethical considerations. (a) Metaphysical. A finite god will not serve to hold the world together as a cosmos. As already argued in the discussion of order, ~~the cosmos~~, or a world that can become anything for science, must be a unity. Professor James says, indeed, "that the universe may actually be a sort of joint-stock society of this sort, in which the sharers have both limited liabilities and limited powers, is of course a simple and conceivable notion." (Will to Believe," 154). A "simple and conceivable notion" to the imagination, perhaps, but not to thought. "God & Co., Ltd.," suggests D. G. Ritchie. Even on the basis of pragmatism a unitary world Ground ought to appear the most reasonable conception. For--call it a "postulate" if you will--the pre-supposition of unity and coherence of all things is necessary to make the sciences work. With such a postulate we are enabled to work with phenomena, to predict the future, and to harness the forces of nature to our human uses. If that is the case, the principle or postulate of unity is not to be sacrificed to the petulance due to the inability to bring all things into order and regularity of law at once. The coherence of elements in the cosmos is infinitely improbable (I do not say formally impossible) on the







supposition of a concurrence that took its start from each single element separately. And if such a coherence is to include the whole universe, a "Finite God" is not sufficient to account for it. We talk at our own risk about any other kind of world. There is no guarantee whatever that it could be intelligible to us. Unless there is "one God, one law, one element" from as well as "to which the whole creation moves," we have no surety of a common understanding of one another, nor of the fact that we are talking about the same world to-day that we were considering yesterday and that we hope still further to get acquainted with tomorrow. Ultimate rationality, on the assumption of which all our conversation, all our science and reasoning depends, requires the dependence of the whole world on one rational Being. (b) Ethical. The pluralists are much concerned about freedom. No doubt, a strong sense of freedom will tend to a desirable ethical result. Whether that will be the practical result from the spread of pluralistic doctrines may well be questioned. For on the basis of a "Finite God" at least a certain amount of evil would have to be accepted as ultimate and existing in its own right. If evil is the product of misused freedom on the part of subordinate beings, the responsibility of their freedom rests heavily on them, and they may be expected to do their part in the eradication of their unfortunate works. But if we are pluralists in order to lift the burden of evil from God, at the same stroke we lift it from men. This we do not want to do. Ethical considerations bid us not to slur over our individual obligation. That is what happens, however, on this pluralistic view of a "Finite God." A certain







resignation results from considering evil as ultimate. This resignation is precisely what ethics cannot tolerate, and what the pluralist unsuccessfully seeks to avoid.

The verbal character of some pluralist objection to divine infinity and absoluteness appears from the fact that McTaggart devotes a score of pages in "Some Dogmas of Religion" to arguing against omnipotence because God must be bound by the Law of Identity, the Law of the Excluded Middle, and by the fact that he could not make a destructible indestructible object. For if he could make such an object, then it would not be indestructible. Could there be anything more verbal? Of course, God cannot transcend the Law of Identity, or set it aside. Neither could he make two times two equal anything else than four; nor cause a grindstone to turn both ways at the same time; but that is only verbally denying omnipotence. The statements are meaningless. God must be conceived of as willing to be rational. If so, he cannot at the same time will to do (or be able to, if one prefers to express it so) the irrational things enumerated above.

Similarly, Schiller urges the fact of the world being in process, not complete, as proof that God cannot be infinite. If he were infinite he would be in every way complete, his world likewise, there would be no need of teleology, economy, adaptations, in order to bring this world into final harmony with the divine will. "See "Riddles of the Sphinx," 361). This is like the thought of Spinoza when he rejected the teleological argument because it would imply that God was imperfect, unsatisfied, and not infinite. Spinoza adopts one horn of the dilemma--either a







purposing and finite God, or a non-purposing and infinite God--while Schiller adopts the other. Both assume we are shut up to such a dilemma. But are we? Is it not perfectly conceivable that an infinite God should choose to realize his will through a developing world? Is there anything more attractive in a static system? The difficulty here arises from a confusion of the being of God with his works or creation. If God simply is the sum total of all that is, then a developing world means an imperfect God. But if God can be thought of, not as an infinite of space, but of intelligence, and therefore transcending his world, then we are not driven to any such conclusion. The answer of our pluralist here might be that a God distinct from his world would not be infinite. But this would hold only on the supposition that infinity involved spatial or quantitative continuity. This is no necessary part of the conception of infinity of dynamic intelligence. When we assert God's infinity we do not mean that his substance extends everywhere, but only that his control does.

Again, it is urged that an infinite God cannot be personal or conscious, for "personality rests on the distinction of one person from another, consciousness on the distinction of Self from Not-Self." (op.cit., 313-314). But, does personality necessarily imply limitation? It does in our case, but in so far as we are limited we fall short of full personality. The essence of personality is self-directive intelligence. We are limited in many ways, both as to our power of self-direction and as to our intelligence. That simply means that our personality is







incomplete. We have perfect personality only when the limitations to self-direction and intelligence are absent-- that is, in the case of an Infinite God only. As to consciousness implying the "distinction of Self and Not-Self," we may dismiss that as a verbal objection to the personality of an Infinite. Why should there not be a not-self for an Infinite? Certainly if the Infinite is to be quantitatively conceived, such a thing would be impossible. Not so, however, when the Infinite is conceived dynamically. In similar vein Schiller urges that an infinite God would be unknowable. (op.cit. 336). This is urged on the ground of the limitations of our human faculties. We cannot grasp the Infinite in our little minds. It is true that we cannot comprehend the Infinite; but there is a difference between knowing partially and knowing fully. So this objection may be dismissed. The same argument could be brought against the knowability of the world. It contains much that surpasses our science, Moreover, no one human being will probably ever possess all knowledge. Therefore, because the world cannot be fully known it cannot be known at all. This is a non sequitur of the same kind that Schiller argues when he affirms that the unknowability of the Infinite in all his fulness would prove the absolute unknowability of such a being at all.

We conclude, then, that an infinite and absolute God may be personal and distinct from a world of selves which he has created. This infinity must, however,







not be thought of as applying in the way either of space or of substance, but rather in the way of cause or dynamic. In other words, between the pantheistic God of an absolute idealism and the "Finite God" of pluralism there is the theistic God who is the personal and creative ground of a world of persons. We may take our answer to James' and Schiller's pluralist notion of a "Finite God" from the mouth of the pluralist McTaggart. In "Some Dogmas of Religion," (259-60), after discussing the device of saving God's moral character by limiting his power, he says: "Finally, it is necessary once more to emphasize the fact that, if God's moral character is saved by limiting his power, we have no right to be confident as to the eventual victory of those ends in which God is interested...We do not even know that they will not be almost completely defeated... That is all that the doctrine of a non-omnipotent God can give us--a person who fights for the good and who may be victorious." Of course, McTaggart believes in no god at all; but he rightly shows up the weakness of the notion of a "Finite God." Our motive for believing in an infinite One is precisely that set forth by McTaggart. The thought of a God having created free spirits and being thwarted by them for a time is tolerable; not so the thought of a God who might be forever thwarted. Of a "Finite God" this must at least be a possibility.

The foregoing discussion shows that much of







the confusion in the debate between monist and pluralist comes from different ways in which the term "independence" is employed. The pluralist agrees with his extreme opponent, the absolutist, in declaring that created beings can have no real independence. In such a system God would be all, and everything that happens would directly be his act. To avoid this outcome the pluralist asserts absolute and ultimate independence, as to ground or cause of being, of his monads. Now, the question is, must we follow him in order to conserve true independence or individuality? To this our answer is, No. If the world-ground is absolute and infinite after the fashion above described, it is conceivable that he should have the power to posit or create beings in a measure like unto himself. If he not by necessity, but of his own free choice endowed them with something of his own freedom, then they would be in a real sense independent, individuals, centres of selfhood as surely as He is himself. But Schiller and James are sure that in a monistic system the many could never be independent or distinct from the One. "For," says Schiller, (op. cit. p 352) "the One, being the sum total of existence, could generate the many only out of itself, and however generated, their generation could not serve any purpose, nor could the Many really be independent of or distinct from the One. In whatever way we put it, the existence of the Many must be illusory: they are of the substance of the One, and can neither disown their parentage nor dissever themselves from the One, which was and is and will be all things." It will







be noticed in the phrase which I have italicized that the mistake is made of conceiving of the Absolute as a quantitative infinite. Further, it is not necessary to assume, as Schiller does, that in a monistic system the many could never in any sense be independent or distinct from the one. If the One Omnipotent willed it so, and by his own free choice limited himself in positing the many, then we might have such independence in what would from thence be a pluralistic system, but a system nevertheless that originally and ultimately was monistic. The same author ("Humanism," p 69) declares that it is not intelligible to speak of an evolving or still unfinished world as in any sense contained in the embrace of an Absolute. This he holds for two reasons: (1) Change is due either to outside stimulus, or, (2) to a "psychical condition of disequilibrium," that is, to a condition of unsatisfied desire. Neither of these could be applied to the Absolute without absurdity. The Absolute cannot be affected from without, because there is nothing outside it. On the other hand, to ascribe change in the Absolute to the second cause would be a travesty.. An Absolute with any want or unfulfilled desire in its nature would have no religious value. To this it may be conceded at once that in the final sense there is nothing outside the Absolute. Change in it could not be ascribed to outer influences, and it is no part of our purpose to maintain anything of the sort, indeed, rather, as against pluralism we would maintain the impossibility of just that. From the







second point we dissent. As already noted in a previous section, our dissent is based on precisely the consideration which Schiller urges in its favor, namely, the religious. There is nothing inherently objectionable in a God whose "psychological condition is disequibrated," to use the author's expression, that is, in a God with unsatisfied desire. This is surely true from the standpoint of religion, whatever may be true from that of an abstract pantheistic Absolute. The gospel of the Christian religion proclaims a God who suffers, loves, sorrows, yearns, and therefore acts. As Lotze rightly teaches, the relative independence of finite spirits "consists, not in a 'Being outside the Infinite' (for such a Being no definition could make clear), but only in this, that they, as spiritual elements, have Being for self. This 'being for self' is the essential factor in that which we, in a formally unsatisfactory way, designate as 'Being outside the Infinite'". ("Outlines of Metaphysic," 155). Conscious selfhood is what constitutes our independence, not self origination. We know ourselves and are aware of the fact that we can act, initiate, to a certain degree. Just so far we are true individuals. This is compatible with the idea that the power of self activity and self consciousness is derived from an Absolute, and not original with ourselves. If, as a matter of terminology, it still be urged that we had better not call the God of such a conception the "Absolute," a concession might be made. It may seem more exact to use that term to denote the sum of all being: God, the Infinite; finite spirits; the world or the phenomenal order. This is the usage of Hastings Rashdall.







There is, however, a quantitative connotation in this use of the word which agrees ill with a critical metaphysics. This matter need not be debated. The point to insist on is, that by use of the term "absolute" or "infinite" we wish to denote the view that God is the ultimate ground of all that is; that nothing exists in original or eternal independence of the one Cause.

The difficulties in the matter of providing for real individuals in a monistic scheme, so urgently pressed by pluralism, rest on a mistaken conception of the relation between the One and the many. If this relation is to be thought of as one of metaphysical substance, the criticisms of pluralism are well founded. A monism of ontological stuff is untenable. The difficulties disappear, however, when the relation between the One and the many is personally conceived. Active intelligence positing its objects, that is a form according to which we may think the world ground as immanent in all being and yet as creating beings like itself, centers of self-directive, conscious life, and therefore individually real. A thoroughly self-centered Absolute, to which the pluralist objects, is practically inconceivable. As the human individual realizes his nature only in self-expression to the extent of self-sacrifice, so the divine Individual. This Individual, as truly as his creatures, is ethical or non-existent. To this statement the pluralist would heartily assent. As ethical, he too, must find his life through self-impartation. Otherwise God would be a lower order of being than his creatures. If, then, he really does impart of his very nature to his creatures, they may be







conceived of as children; and thus human individuality is fully provided for.

Justice requires a full recognition of the ethical motive of pluralists at this point. Criticism can dispose of their metaphysical conclusions while at the same time noting that pluralistic ideals are embraced because their exponents wish to champion the cause of freedom. Their theory is professedly based on an appreciation of personality. It is natural to expect, then, that they should be indeterminists. James and Schiller are pragmatists, and their belief in freedom is related to their voluntarism. The whole cognitive life depends, for them, on a certain free exercise of our faculties in striving to satisfy human needs. James goes farther than any of the others in his affirmation of indeterminism. He boldly makes use of the word "chance." He is very much in earnest with "contingency." There are open possibilities in the universe, and he is entirely averse to any attempt to heal them over in any finally absolute system. This position he takes with the greater assurance that he is a convinced "radical empiricist." Power to the contrary is a fact of experience. Contingency we meet, and only sophistication can explain it away. Why seek to go back of the patent fact? Accept it as ultimate. In some such way runs his thought. He refuses to be made uncomfortable by the possibility of having to posit things which cannot be fitted into a finally rational system. "Make as great an uproar about chance as you please, I know that chance means pluralism and







nothing more. If some of the members of the pluralism are bad, the philosophy of pluralistic realism, whatever broad views it may deny me, permits me, at least, to turn to the other members with a clean breast of affection and an unsophisticated moral sense." ("Will to Believe," p 178). So, also, we see, that on the subject of freedom Howison is the most explicit. He records his disagreement with James' "confessed and despairing ultimate irrationalism." This is in reference to a remark of James: "According to that philosophy (pluralistic or individualistic philosophy), the truth is too great for any one actual mind, even though that mind be dubbed 'the Absolute,' to know the whole of it....There is no point of view absolutely public and universal." The significance of <sup>e</sup>~~this~~ difference between Howison and James is this. James is a pluralist because he is an empiricist. Howison is not an empiricist, but a rationalist in epistemology. He is a pluralist chiefly from ethical considerations. He thinks that man cannot be considered free and that the law of determinism cannot be overcome unless we give up the notion of man as a created being. Hence he embraces pluralism, for freedom must be maintained at all costs. "There is no escaping from the reasoning of an Augustine, a Calvin, an Edwards, except by removing its premise. That premise is the utter finitude of the 'creature', resting upon the conception that the Divine functions of creation and regeneration, more especially creation, are operations by what is called 'efficient' causation, that is, causation by direct productive energy, whose



nothing more. It is one of the dangers of the scientific method, the philosophy of scientific method, whatever price we pay it may cost us, to make it, to say in the other words with a clear sense of its limitations and an unqualified sense of its value. ("What is Science," p. 178). So, also, we see, that on the subject of freedom, Huxley is explicit. He reads his statement with James, "contained and despising alike irrationalism." This is in reference to a remark of James: "According to that philosophy (which is the basis of scientific philosophy), the truth is too great for any one actual mind, even though it is to be shared 'the Absolute', to know the whole of it. There is no point of view absolutely public and eternal." The significance of this difference between Huxley and James is that James is a pluralist because he is an empiricist. Huxley is not an empiricist, but a rationalist in epistemology. He is a pluralist chiefly from evolutionary considerations. He thinks that man cannot be considered free and that the law of determinism cannot be overcome unless we give up the notion of man as a created being. Hence he advocates pluralism, for freedom must be maintained at all costs. "There is no escape from the reasoning of an Augustine, a Calvin, an Edwards, except by removing the premises. That premise is the view that the 'creature', resting upon the conception that the Divine functions of creation and regeneration, were supernatural creation, are operations by what is called 'eternal' causes, that is, causation by direct productive energy, whence



effects are of course as helpless before it as any motion is before the impact that starts it." (op.cit. 331).

On the next page: "No being that arises out of efficient causation can possibly be free." This shows to what logical lengths Howison is willing to go to save freedom. He sacrifices efficient causation altogether, substituting final causation in its place, in the relation between God and man. From all this it is apparent that the freedom the pluralists arrive at is that of cosmic free-booters, not that of sons of God. In fact, pluralism does not secure real freedom for us at all. For the individual has his real life of freedom, not in isolation, but in relation to others, in society. The term freedom has no meaning for one living in a world alone. Now, the individual of pluralism really lives alone. There may be myriads of others like himself, but he never can get into relation with them on a pluralistic basis. As soon as pluralism becomes "harmonic" it ceases to be pluralism. The contention of pluralistic metaphysics is, that if the many depend for their being on the One, this One would be the only free agent. Whatever the many did, the One would be solely responsible for it. If God could have refrained from making us, or could have destroyed us, as Schiller suggests, and did not in the face of our evil-doing, he must be charged with the blame of our sin. This conception rests on a strange view of the divine creative activity. It would hold only if in creating man God had made automata. In that case he would be chargeable with the acts of such







mechanisms. It is different if we look upon finite spirits as creatures deliberately endowed with freedom.

Hence we conclude that the fact of human freedom does not demand pluralism in order to clear the skirts of God from responsibility for evil and sin. Rather, the very term "free" as applied to finite spirits implies that the relation between the One and the many is such as to preclude any compromise of the divine character. While we admit that the recoil of pluralism from a pantheistic absolute idealism is justified, we repeat that the pluralism of metaphysically independent elements is not the only way out of the difficulty. Professor Schiller caricatures monism on the subject of dissociation of personality by reference to the case of the "Beauchamp family." He represents the problem of different persons all being grounded in the One Absolute by comparison with the phenomena of the subliminal in psychology. Here was the case of a certain Miss Beauchamp who in different psychological states appeared respectively as "Saint," "Sally," "Idiot," and then again just Miss Beauchamp. On the monist theory, Schiller goes on to say, "All existences would be secondary personalities of the one Absolute differing infinitely in their contents, character, and capacity, and capable of coexistence and concurrent manifestation to a much greater extent than were the members of the Beauchamp family, in which this power was possessed only by 'Sally.' We should accordingly all be the "Idiots," "Saints," and "Sallies" of the universal Beauchamp family which had been engendered by the 'Dissociation' of the Absolute. This might not be altogether pleasing to all of us (especially to those who,







like the writer, would seem to have been predestined to be among the "Sallies" of the Absolute); but the idea itself would be quite conceivable and free from theoretical objection." (Journal of Philosophy, etc., Vol. III, No. 18, a 480). The satire of Professor Schiller holds as against pantheism. But a fundamental monism is not necessarily pantheistic. It is possible to conceive of one sole Ground of all being and of true individuality of persons at the same time. The fact that persons are truly distinct is no necessary indication that they have always been so, and that they carry the ground of their independence in themselves. It is thinkable that the independence of persons, or such relative independence as they may possess, has been decreed and achieved by the one causal Ground which lies back of the whole world process, or which is immanent in it. This would furnish the reason for conceiving of a monistic world in which personality and freedom could dwell. Perhaps the term "pluralism" might be applied to this view, because metaphysical freedom would be affirmed of the finite spirits that make up the world. Strictly, however, it would not be exact to call this pluralism. For it would be a world where all ultimately depended on the One. The One would be thought of as having founded the independence. The whole system depending on the One, it would not be beyond the range of possibility to suppose that the independence, once conferred, could be taken away, or the very existence of the independent beings cancelled. Thus by the creative will of the One, which we







may also suppose to be a will of benevolent wisdom, the dignity of freedom would have been conferred. This would give a basis for ethics; but it would be a freedom limited to the extent of the universal and final dependence of the many on the One.

The absolute independence of the pluralist could not exist in a social world and a world of common speech and understanding. If the absolute metaphysical independence and eternal separateness of spirits be a fact, there is no way to provide for their getting together in a system of mutual intelligibility. Each would constitute a system for itself. The fact that they can speak to one another and understand one another proves that they are not independent in any pluralistic sense. The fundamental categories of thought are the same for all of them, as the words of a language are the same for all who speak it. This indicates an ideal bond of union between all the separate elements of the world of spirits. The fact of this bond or connection is just as significant as the freedom or independence of the spirits who are thus united. How are we going to account for this bond? Not on any pluralistic ground. This would require the assumption of a chance commensurability and concurrence of many altogether separate elements. This is too enormous an assumption to make. The logical strain is less upon us when we infer that the mutuality of separate spirits implies that there is a One which is the final ground of all the many.

With all their concern for freedom and individuality, the pluralists may be charged with rendering impos-







ible a successful foundation for ethics. Ethics, and the motive to a moral life, depend on belief in a rational moral order. If the world is such, it is the system and the expression of One. William James seems to be of another opinion. Feeling the importance of real freedom for true morality, he concludes that finite spirits must exist in metaphysical independence of God, whom, in turn, he likewise conceives of as finite. In "Will to Believe," (174-5) we read: "Our responsibility ends with the performance of duty, and the burden of the rest we may lay on higher powers. Very well. The question arises, can we feel the confidence of laying "the burden of the rest on higher powers" unless we believe that all things form a rational system? In other passages James does not thus comfortingly refer us to the "higher powers" for the assurance that things will come out all right. He makes, rather, stirring appeals to us as independent spirits to help the "Finite God" in his struggle to prevent a cosmic crash. The fact is, our ethical assurance rests on a belief that our moral maxims are founded on the very nature of things. This (metaphysical) nature we conceive to be rational, and therefore right. If it is rational it is not disjunct, but uniform; and if uniform it all proceeds from a One. This is the dialectic of any ethic which seeks to operate on a higher basis than expediency, any ethic that makes earnest with the word "duty," as James does in the above quotation. Ethics lays its demands upon us, calls us to submit caprice and passing whim, because of an assumed right to exact submission of the many to the One. Implicit here is the conviction that the feeling of the individual



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is not fundamental, that there is something more basic. This fundamental ought to rule. This is ethics. It is precisely, however, what pluralism denies. The feeling of the individual is considered to be the true and ultimate reality. This is the immediately given and hence final fact of a "radical empiricism." Why speak of an "ought" that lies back of or stands over the individual fact and feeling? Any true ethic does just this, however. Hence ethics, any system of obligatory morality, carries with it the refutation of pluralism.







### 5. The Absolute and Evil.

The ascription of metaphysical independence to the human individual is of a piece with the pluralist solution of the problem of evil. Howison is able to dispose of this problem because in a pluralistic system God is not bound up with all parts of being, both good and bad. It may, however, be doubted whether Howison succeeds in extricating the God of his "Harmonic Pluralism" from the world's evil. Nevertheless, that is intended to be the implication of his pluralism. "Between mind and mind, between God and all other minds, there is no causation but Final Cause; the sole realm of Efficient Cause is the realm of Nature, whether physical or psychic, objective or subjective; efficient causation operates from the non-divine minds to their natural (or phenomenal) and sensuous contents, or else, in a secondary manner, between the serial terms of these. Hence God is in no wise responsible for the evil, either natural or moral, that we find in the world of experience, but only for the good that gradually arises in it; and even for this good only in chief." (op.cit. 392, italics mine). According to James, the great hindrance to light on the problem of evil is the absolutist habit of thought. Monistically to refer all being to one ultimate cause amounts to one of two things: either we besmirch the character of our God; or we dreamily reduce the distinction between good and evil to illusion. From both of these difficulties a pluralistic metaphysics saves us. A good bath of empiricism is an effective antidote to the abso-







lutist reduction of evil to maya. He refers approvingly to Carlyle's gospel of work. We escape the perplexities of the problem of evil in a practical way of worthy activity. "But what is the essence of this philosophy of objective conduct, so old-fashioned and finite, but so chaste and sane and strong, when <sup>compared</sup> ~~compared~~ with its romantic rival? "With "romantic rival" James means the absolutist merging of good and evil alike in God). It is the recognition of limits, foreign and opaque to our understanding. It is the willingness, after bringing about some external good, to feel at peace; for our responsibility ends with the performance of that duty, and the burden of the rest we may lay on higher powers.

'Look to thyself, O Universe,  
Thou art better and not worse,'

we may say in that philosophy, the moment we have done our stroke of conduct, however small. For in the view of that philosophy the universe belongs to a plurality of semi-independent forces, each one of which may help or hinder, and be helped or hindered by, the operations of the rest."

"Will to Believe," 174-175, italics mine). Schiller declares we manufacture the problem of evil for ourselves.

It is a matter of pervetted will,--not the evil, but the problem. We "revel in infinities." This is bad taste.

If we only come to our senses and give up the foolish notion of an infinite God the problem vanishes. "The insolubility of the 'mystery of evil' arises simply and solely out of the fact that people will neither abandon the practice of passing moral judgments on events, nor the dogmas which







render all ethical valuation an ultimate foolishness. As soon as they make up their distracted 'minds' (wills) which of the incompatible alternatives they will choose to abide by, whether they prefer to vindicate the supreme validity of moral distinctions, or the 'infinity of God' and the absolute 'unity of the universe,' the mystery disappears." ("Axioms as Postulates," in "Personal Idealism," 130). In another connection Schiller puts what he evidently considers a "poser" at the monistic philosopher when he asks him, "Why were so many millions of fleas essential to the happiness or comfort of the Absolute?" One perfect specimen ought to have been enough. On a pluralistic basis, however, such a difficulty would never arise. It no longer becomes necessary to insist on a God who is at once almighty and benevolent. Such evil as does exist may be ascribed to an imperfect harmony among ultimate spirits, or egos. Moreover, a pluralistic world view which includes belief in metempsychosis promises well for working evil out of the cosmic system. (cf "Riddles of the Sphinx," chap. X, on "Man and God."). Souls who have the taint of evil cannot be destroyed, of course, for they form part of ultimate reality and hence are indestructible; but their consciousness can be reduced to a low order, and in a state of torpor they could be induced to fall in line with the laws of the cosmos and so be made worthy of a higher form of existence in another birth. This is to be conceived of as going from stage to stage of perfection; not, however, without the possibility of a fall downward remaining







until at last "a complete harmony of all existences has been attained."

The chief points to note in these pluralistic attempts to solve the problem of evil are two: (1) a determination to save the character of God in the face of the world's maladjustments; (2) a conviction that the mystic-poetic haze which blurs moral distinctions must be avoided. Hence the pluralist feels driven to assert a "Finite God." The fact of evil and error makes of any Absolute a monster, he declares. This would be the case if there were no longer any room for individuality in the system of an Absolute. It may be conceded that the pluralist is right as regards a system of abstract absolutism. But the Absolute need not be conceived pantheistically. A theistic Absolute does not swallow up everything. All depends on him for its being; but he has so ordered that a certain class of beings which depend on him (spirits) shall be like himself. Thenceforward they have self existence, which they may use or abuse within limits, of course, but limits of wide range. It is the other kind of Absolute that the pluralists have in view when they criticize it for its implication with error and evil. For example, Schiller, ("Riddles of the Sphinx," 316): "Nor again, can the responsibility for evil be shifted to the Devil or to the perversity due to human free will, unless these powers really limit the divine omnipotence. For if we or the Devil are permitted to do evil while God is able to prevent or destroy us, the real responsibility rests with God." Here he truly says we cannot shift the responsibility for evil to human freedom without limiting the divine omnipotence. It is true, there







is a limitation on God, but it is not necessary to think of this limitation after the fashion of the pluralists and make it eternal and necessary. Rather, we can think of it as self-imposed. There is a difference between external limitation and self-chosen limitation. The former would make God finite. The latter he may assume in the normal functioning of his absoluteness.

Now, if we thus have a self-limiting on the part of the Absolute, we have the way paved for the beginnings of a solution of the problems of error and evil. If in reality we are free, then we may misuse our freedom. Our faculties as grounded by or depending on the Absolute are right; but they will now be subject to careless or wilful use. The result will be error. In the same way moral evil will arise when we abuse our moral freedom. Moreover, on this view we have the promise of a final solution in favor of truth and good. If in the last analysis all depends on God, we may be confident that it will come out all right. This pluralism cannot promise, because with a "Finite God" contingency must remain eternal. The issue may be good, but the possibility must always remain for it to be otherwise. No guarantee is afforded that right will finally prevail. A finite God might be a defeated God. If we are sure from the start that God cannot fail, as Howison and Schiller are, then our God is not finite. It ought to be remarked that Howison does not so designate his God; but he has so many "infinities" in his system that it amounts to the same thing. His use of the term "infinite" is a solecism. Schiller







and James employ the term. This "Finite God" may be ever so strong and ever so good. Still he remains finite. It is no mere fancy which sees in modern pluralism a connection with Gnosticism of old. They are not parts of a connected movement, but in a real sense they are expressions of the same mood of mind. H. G. Wells, literary pluralist, recognizes and parries the parallel in his "God the Invisible King." Gnosticism was propounded partly from a feeling that evil must be removed far from God. But it left men with a world in which evil was inherent in its very being, and from which the holy God was removed to an infinite distance. The outcome was not hopeful for its final solution, and the practical effect was to drive men to an unnatural asceticism. Thus, also, the pluralists call God "finite" to relieve him of responsibility for the world's evil. The problem of evil is great enough, surely; but the Gnostics and pluralists magnify it. That is, they insist on its essential insolubility for the world. It is very evil. To think of God related to it is to degrade him. Hence a kind of Manichaeism is advanced. The evil here is due to devils, a hierarchy of them. To be true, the outcome of the battle against it remains in doubt on such a hypothesis; but at any rate the moral character of such God as is left is hypothetically saved.

In all this we see how the problem of evil in a system depending on an Absolute is magnified by pluralism on account of the failure to distinguish between an Absolute as substance and an Absolute as cause. Schiller objects







that in a system such as Lotze's monism "all the phases of existence are alike characteristic of the All." ("Humanism", 81). This criticism overlooks the fact that an Absolute might posit free beings within its system. "Once equate God with the totality of existence,"--(page 81)--but a true monism does not "equate" God with the totality of things; it refers them to him as their causal Ground. This Ground may have chosen to create free beings. This assertion holds on the supposition that the world Ground be viewed as free Intelligence. If it be viewed simply under the category of substance, the statement would not hold, of course; but such a view is untenable. The immanent One is not stuff, but Intelligence in action. Such a creative Intelligence may see fit to elevate some of its creatures to a position of likeness with itself. In that case there would be a limitation of the One, but a free limitation, one that might conceivably be recalled, and hence by no means one that could be taken as the basis for a pluralistic view of the world. The ultimate dependence of the many would be on the One.

We are compelled to recognize that pluralism leads to no optimistic solution of the problem of evil. The separate beings fight alone. On the other hand, under a monistic view evil cannot be accepted as a final aspect of reality. The very fact, if it be a fact, that God is the ultimate reality, gives assurance that evil will be overcome. The fact that God, in a monistic system, must be viewed as sharing in the experiences of all beings, evil







included, is an earnest of that evil being ultimately overcome. Some monists claim that the evil was predetermined for a benign end. It is possible to see how good ends are actually served through evil without assuming that God originally willed it. Freedom in finite spirits so strongly emphasized by the pluralist, would account for the origin of moral evil. At the same time, the assurance, open only on the plane of a basal monism, that in the plan of an infinite God this evil was vanquished, would produce a type of devotion and abandon in the moral struggle such as a belief in an eternal contingency and uncertainty could hardly exhibit. Professor James magnifies the moral appeal of pluralism, a system which gives the individual to feel that something really depends on himself, and that God himself might be caught in ruin unless each man does his part to avert the calamity. It may be affirmed, however, that the steadiest will and most unflinching characters have been developed under the influence of a conviction that the Universe was on the side of righteousness in the moral conflict. Such a conviction is the antithesis of pluralism.







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- Note: → "JPPSM" is used in this bibliography as abbreviation for "Journal of Philosophy, Psychology, and Scientific Methods."

























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